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# Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

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Rome's Transformation Equation:

(i) at time $(t)$ $\quad \mathcal{E}ec < Uk + Usa$

(ii) at time $(t + \delta t)$ and neglecting the Washington and Paris Conversion Factors $\quad \mathcal{E}ec + Uk \geqslant Usa$

Addendum: differentiating with respect to power and control $(x)$

at time $(t)$ $\quad \frac{d(\mathcal{E}ec)}{dx} = Frg + \text{Washington Conversion Factor } (W)$

$> \text{Paris Conversion Factor } (P)$

at time $(t + \delta t)$ $\quad \frac{d(\mathcal{E}ec)}{dx} = Frg + Uk + (W) \gg (P)$

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# MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

**Volume 15 Number 10**

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# Editorial Comments

RECENT NEWS from the Sudan indicates that despite the heavy losses sustained by the Sudanese Communist Party and other progressive forces, the struggle against the dictatorship is continuing. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Sudan was able to hold a meeting in August at which it took decisions concerning its future activity, and elected a new General Secretary.

A recent report in the Lebanese Communist Party paper "Al Nida" reveals that leaflets issued by the Sudanese Communist Party have been circulating in Khartoum, and that other forms of resistance are continuing.

At the same time other news indicates that the repression is unceasing, and it is necessary therefore to maintain the campaign in Britain to secure the release of all political prisoners.

The deep roots which the Communist Party of the Sudan has established amongst the Sudanese working people and the popular support enjoyed by the organisations of students, youth, women, along with the Trade Unions, are the guarantee that the struggle will be continued until the dictatorship is defeated and democratic rights won for the people of the Sudan.

## URUGUAY

Anxious eyes in Latin America will be turned towards Uruguay in November, when general elections are to be held. Although the electoral law is heavily biased in favour of the two traditional (and equally reactionary) parties, the *Blancos* and the *Colorados*, a new formation of the left, the Broad Front (*Frente Amplio*) is preparing to enter the contest with great vigour and hope. Uniting a whole range of movements of the left, including the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, Christian Democrats, some smaller groupings and a breakaway movement from the traditional parties, the Broad Front is supporting as its Presidential candidate General Liber Seregni, whom it characterises as "a man of brilliant honesty, a great patriot, not a nationalist".

The programme of the Broad Front, which has also been adopted by the National Confederation of Workers (C.N.T.), is anti-imperialist, includes agrarian reform, and is "aimed at the recovery of national resources and nationalisation of those large enterprises which depend mainly on foreign credits." Broad Front committees are being formed in neighbourhoods and places of work (as was done in Chile with the Popular Unity committees) and great optimism is expressed for success in the forth-coming struggle, though recent events in Bolivia strike a warning note. General Seregni is more of a Torres than an Allende (he is not a Marxist nor even a socialist); the Broad Front is new compared to the long growth of Popular Unity in Chile; and the struggle will be severe. It is even rumoured that the elections may not take place. Whichever way it goes, left unity is being built and the people's forces are thereby all the stronger for the battles that lie ahead.

## COMECON ADVANCES

The Council of Mutual Economic Aid (Comecon) which embraces the majority of Socialist countries, has been the consistent target for derisive and derogatory comment in the capitalist countries. Formed in 1949, it now has over 21 years of experience behind it. But its achievements (the seven-fold increase in mutual trade between 1950 and 1970 as well as others) and decisions have always been misrepresented and distorted and compared unflatteringly with the "great results" achieved by those capitalist countries belonging to the Common Market.

The real face of capitalist "integration" is to be seen in the conflicts between Germany and France in the Common Market and the tremendous struggle now being waged between the USA and other major capitalist powers following the dollar crisis in the USA and Mr. Nixon's "package deal" in the attempt to deal with it.

At the end of July there took place the 25th meeting of the Council of Comecon which worked out and adopted a most detailed programme for futher collaboration in the economic, financial, commercial and

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scientific spheres for the next ten to fifteen years. [1]

The aims of the new programme are perhaps best summed up in a part of subsection 5 of chapter 1 of the programme. These are:—

Increasing the material and cultural standards of the peoples of the member countries;

Consistent advance to the equalisation of economic development of the Comecon countries;

Increasing the stability and commercial capacity of the Socialist world market;

Strengthening the economic positions of the member countries aiming at securing victory for Socialism in the economic competition with capitalism;

Strengthening the defence capacity of the Comecon countries.

It is impossible to reproduce the dozens of detailed concrete proposals agreed to at this meeting. A random selection of one or two under the different major heads will perhaps give some idea of the scope of this vastly impressive and important programme.

Mutual consultations on basic questions of economic policy; exchange of experience and further co-operation in the sphere of scientific and economic prognosis (forecasting); co-ordination of long-term plans for particular industries; exchange of technical information, licences, results of research, production and experience by agreement between the different countries.

Collaboration in scientific and technical matters is particularly impressive. There is to be collaboration on (amongst other things) the following projects: prognoses regarding scientific and technical advances over the next ten to fifteen years; collaboration in scientific research on problems of biophysics; improving the food value of existing food, developing new ones with an infinitely higher food content; measures for the protection of nature; utilisation of the mineral resources of the seas and oceans; prevention of corrosion in metals etc.

Similar detailed proposals regarding collaboration in foreign trade, including question of price formation; perfecting finance and foreign exchange relations; problems of transport, legal questions etc.

It should be added that the final section of the programme emphasises that each country involved is free to collaborate in some parts of the programme only if it does not wish to do so with regard to the programme as a whole, and that participation in this programme is freely open to non-members of Comecon.

The carrying out of this programme will undoubtedly assist both the economic advance of the Socialist countries involved, and strengthen their solidarity and mutual relations.

[1] A series of articles dealing much more fully with the decisions of the Comecon Council meeting began in *Soviet Weekly* issue of August 24.

## 90th ANNIVERSARY OF GEORGI DIMITROV

Georgi Dimitrov, the great Bulgarian revolutionary was born on June 18th, 1882, and next June the Bulgarian people and the whole international working class movement will be celebrating the 90th anniversary of his birth.

At the last meeting of our Editorial Board, we decided to prepare for next June a special Dimitrov number of *Marxism Today*.

There will be an article on the Bulgarian Communist Party, its precursers and the role of Dimitrov in its formation and development. Bulgaria was one of the first countries to develop a Marxist Party. An article on Dimitrov's heroic stand at the Leipzig "Reichstag Fire" Trial and also on the counter-trial organised in solidarity with the anti-fascist defendants. We hope that one of those most involved in the solidarity struggle in those days will invoke memories of the struggle in this country to release Dimitrov and his co-defendants.

Amongst the most important studies will be the examination of Dimitrov's role in preparing and reporting at the 7th Congress of the Communist International in 1935. Unity against war and fascism was the keynote of Dimitrov's famous report and, amongst the theoretical questions treated, the relation of the fight for democracy and the fight for socialism, and the inter-relation of patriotism and internationalism.

We hope to discuss in this issue Dimitrov's report at the 5th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party in December 1948 in which he treated the building of socialism in Bulgaria, and examined the relations of People's Democracy to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The issue will also, we hope, contain treatment of Dimitrov on the youth documents and illustrations.

It is fortunate that a considerable volume of Dimitrov's writing is now available in

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English* including the selected works in 2 volumes, a single volume selection "For a United and Popular Front", a volume on the Leipzig Trial—"Georgi Dimitrov Leipzig 1933" and a small volume—"For Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism" which contains his Report and Reply at the 7th Congress of the Communist International.

## TRAILBLAZERS

The Trade Union Publishing House, Tribune, in the GDR, has issued a unique book by Heinz Deutschland. Entitled *Trailblazers*, it is an account of the organisations and struggles of the African Workers before 1945. Originally issued in German, this has since been published in English.

Heinz Deutschland, who was formerly director of the Fritz Heckert Trade Union School at Bernau, where he became well-known to many visiting trade unionists from Africa, has produced a most valuable study.

The main virtue of this book is probably its establishment of the important role played by the African working class in the wider struggle of the African people for national liberation. It has, for some time, been argued by establishment theoreticians, that the African trade union movement was primarily an importation from the imperialist countries themselves; and that the African workers played little or no part in the national struggle. Oddly enough, many New Left supporters, echoing the conceptions of Franz Fanon, repeat the same myths. By fact and argument, Heinz Deutschland refutes these false theories.

The research carried out by Heinz Deutschland has extended beyond 1945, the end-date of this volume. One hopes that it will not be too long before we are presented with a second volume covering the post-1945 period in which the African working class and trade union movement made significant progress.

* Georgi Dimitrov Selected Works in two volumes, £3: Leipzig, 1933, £1.25: "For a United and Popular Front" £1.25: "For the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism", 35p. All available from Central Books Limited, 37 Grays Inn Road, London. WC1X 8PS.

## J. D. BERNAL

It was too late for us to comment adequately on the death of Professor J. D. Bernal—world renowned scientist, outstanding Marxist and fighter for peace and socialism, a member of our Editorial Board since it was established and frequent contributor to our columns—before this number went to press.

We hope to be able to do so in our next and subsequent numbers. Meanwhile we join in paying our tribute to this remarkable man and expressing our sincere condolences to all the members of his family.

# The European Common Market[1]

## Phil Leeson

If the European Common Market had never been created the six countries concerned would in all probability have had high rates of growth of output, high rates of growth of trade with the rest of the world, and yet higher rates of growth of trade between themselves. There would have been a good deal of investment in one another's economies, and a great deal of United States' investment in them all. They would no doubt have increased their trade, aid and investment in the underdeveloped countries. Very probably their reserves would have grown and their currencies become stronger. They would still to this day have been capitalist countries, and would still have been members of NATO.

Since the war trends in world trade have been strongly towards a rapid rise in trade in manufactures between industrial countries. By contrast the trade between industrial countries and primary product producers has been relatively stagnant. Likewise, the focus of international investment has shifted towards inter-penetration of one another's economies by the industrial capitalist nations. There are many reasons for this. Among them (and not necessarily the most important) have been the successive rounds of tariff reductions negotiated through GATT culminating in the Kennedy Round, and the success (till recently) of the IMF in preserving international currency stability.

The industrial countries of Europe shared to the full in these boom conditions. (The slow growth of

[1] Part II dealing with Britain and the EEC will appear in a subsequent issue.

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Britain is a special case). In the mid-1950's when the Treaty of Rome was being negotiated there may have seemed to have been considerable additional advantages in taking extra steps towards dismantling tariff barriers between the Six. So far as industry was concerned these advantages, if any, could have been obtained by the creation of an industrial Free Trade Area, (involving abolition of tariffs between the members but leaving each country free to maintain its own tariffs and preferences with the rest of the world) as the British wanted. But the Six went further and created a Customs Union in which the members abolished tariffs between one another and maintained a common tariff towards the outside world. On such an important question as whether or not this step produced any substantial economic benefits there is very little unambiguous evidence. Nor is there much guidance available from conventional economic theory.

**Economic Theory**

The branches of economic theory which are most relevant are the theory of growth and the offshoot of the theory of international trade which deals with customs unions. The dangers involved in seeking guidance from these theories, with their talk of overall economic growth and welfare to the exclusion of discussion of changes in the distribution of income, changes in industrial structure and changes in the relative power of different sections of national capitalist groupings, is that it may distract attention from the real motivations inducing governments to seek economic alliances. But a discussion of theory is certainly not irrelevant in the present context. (Incidentally the critics of orthodox theory have not yet worked out a satisfactory alternative though progress is being made. But whether or not the framers of EEC policy are guided by orthodox theory, they certainly are not guided by its critics!)

International trade is held to be beneficial in that it enables countries to specialise in those activities in which they have a comparative advantage. World wide free-trade would maximise these benefits. Customs Unions involve free trade within just a part of the world. Hence they involve both the beneficial aspects of "trade creation" within the Union, and the harmful effects of "trade diversion" when the formation of the Union leads to a purchase of high cost goods from partner countries to the exclusion of cheaper goods from more efficient producers in the outside world. A set of propositions can be deduced stating the conditions under which a Customs Union will be on balance beneficial to its members. Attempts can be made to measure the benefits. Those that were made about the time EEC was starting indicated the likelihood of very small gains from the resultant trade changes—as little as 1 per cent of the national product of the countries concerned. This is because these countries were already getting many of the advantages from participating in foreign trade, and a good deal of economic activity is not capable of being traded anyway.

One trouble with this sort of analysis is that it is "static", relating to a once-for-all reshuffling of trade patterns between countries with given sets of resources (even though the reshufflling may take several years to accomplish). Of greater importance may be the "dynamic" factors leading to growth in these sets of resources, capital equipment, skills, economic infrastructure etc. These may both require and lead to a different pattern of trade from that which seems to be indicated by existing resources. The inhabitants of many underdeveloped countries could make appropriate comments about the results of trade patterns based on comparative advantage principles. The Soviet Union and China for many years sacrificed many of the advantages of trade whilst experiencing the much greater advantages of growth.

But the theory of growth is equally unable to offer much guidance. This theory has only really developed in the last twenty years, partly because of the post-war concern with comparative economic performance between capitalist and socialist countries and between capitalist countries themselves. It has been fairly easy to point to various factors involved in growth—higher rates of investment, expenditure on education, returns to larger scale of operation, technical progress through research and development spending, the movement of people from agriculture to industry, improvements in managerial efficiency (fashionably referred to as "X-efficiency"), etc. Clearly dynamic inter-relationships of many factors are involved. For instance technical progress and capital investment will go hand in hand. There are consequently great difficulties in making quantitative estimates of the importance of the separate effects.

Supporters of the Common Market drew attention especially to the advantages of belonging to a large and a rapidly growing "home" market in that the economies of large scale production can be reaped. Higher rates of investment (including US investment) are stimulated. Big firms are more willing to make research and development expenditures. The pressure of greater competition has an energising effect on managers (and workers). But the arguments are normally couched in very general terms, more as statements of faith than as summaries of evidence. For instance the Labour Government's White Paper Cmnd 4289 says (para. 65) "—it seems highly probable that the creation of the Community itself generated a faster rate of growth through greater specialisation and greater competition than the economies of the Six member countries would have separately enjoyed . . .". The Conservative

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White Paper Cmnd 4715 says (para. 46) "It is generally agreed that for advanced industrial countries the most favourable environment is one where markets are large and are free from barriers to trade". When it does descend from the level of generalities to a more definite statement about the EEC, the Conservative White Paper says (para. 50) "The abolition of tariffs and this consequent increase in intra-trade were accompanied by important changes in the performance of manufacturing industries in the Six countries.

Those industries which competed with imports faced an intensification of competitive pressure as tariffs fell, obliging them to seek ways of raising efficiency and reducing costs. By the same token prospects for exporting dramatically improved. Import competition and export expansion were closely associated with a growth in investment. The outcome of these processes was a significant improvement in the rate of growth of manufacturing productivity and therefore higher national incomes in the Community than the member countries believe they would have enjoyed otherwise". Phrases like "were accompanied by", "by the same token", "were closely associated with", and "the outcome of these processes" are all ways of avoiding a straight attribution of causes and effects. The passage finally attempts to insure itself by putting the onus on the EEC members for these judgements by the insertion of the word "believe".

## The Results of the Customs Union in Practice

The factual history of the EEC so far does not enable a conclusion to be reached. The well-known comparisons showing output growing faster than in the UK and the USA, with trade growing rapidly, and real wages and social services improving relatively to other countries are not adequate evidence. As has been said there are many causes of growth. In a study in the 'National Institute Economic Review', November 1970, Major, Hays and Grunberger came to the conclusion that there is no substantial evidence that EEC countries have become more specialised, more competitive, or faster growing by reason of membership. The main visible consequence has been a rapid increase in intra-EEC trade with Italy gaining at the expense of the rest. The EEC has also probably accelerated Belgium's growth rate.

The Common Market's share of world trade in manufacturing goods with non-EEC members, previously rising, has fallen since 1961. (In 1962 they had 37.9 per cent of the total and in 1969 they had 35.2 per cent). And although intra-EEC trade has risen rapidly there is no firm evidence that imports from the outside world have been lower as a result of the formation of the EEC than they would otherwise have been.

| *Of Total EEC Consumption* | 1954 % | 1958 % | 1968 % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Domestic output provided | 89.5 | 87.7 | 79.8 |
| EEC intra-trade provided | 5.1 | 6.2 | 12.3 |
| Non EEC sources provided | 5.4 | 6.2 | 7.9 |

In looking for the effects of the formation of the Customs Union Major, Hays and Grunberger find little evidence of any great increase in the inter-country specialisation which one would expect from such a development. Each country still produces a very large share of its own consumption. Within each country those industries which previously supplied a high percentage of total intra-EEC trade now supply a smaller share and those which had a small share previously now have a bigger one i.e. specialisation by industry groupings has been reduced rather than increased.

Kaldor also (*New Statesman* 12.3.71), quoting an OECD study of engineering industries, notes that after ten years of the Common Market each country still retains an enormously high share of its own market. In 1967/68 West Germany produced 89.9 per cent of its own engineering goods and only supplied 9.8 per cent of the market in the other five countries. France produced 84.3 per cent herself and only supplied 2.8 per cent of the rest of the EEC market. He contrasts this with the degree of economic integration in the USA, where Michigan produces only 42 per cent of its own engineering and 24 per cent of the consumption of other American states. After ten years of the Common Market Germany was still in fact more self-sufficient than Britain in engineering goods. Not only is economic integration a long way off, but the extent of diversion of trade away from the outside world has so far been very small. EEC producers produced 92.7 per cent of EEC consumption of engineering goods in 1962/3 and this only rose to 93.7 per cent by 1967/8.

So far as growth rates of output are concerned Major, Hays and Grunberger pick out as significant the fact that the gap between the EEC and the rest of Europe has narrowed since the formation of the Common Market—their growth rates have slackened whilst the rest of Europe has been catching up.

| *Growth Rates of GNP* | 1950-58 % | 1954-58 % | 1958-69 % |
|---|---|---|---|
| EEC | 5.6 | 5.7 | 5.4 |
| Rest of European OECD | 3.2 | 3.0 | 4.3 |
| Total OECD (inc. Japan, USA etc.) | 3.9 | 3.4 | 5.1 |

This narrowing of the disparity is even more marked when manufacturing output alone is considered. Here there is only a very slight remaining gap between EEC and the rest of (non socialist) Europe.

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| *Growth Rates of Manufacturing Output* | 1954-58 | 1958-69 |
|---|---|---|
| | % | % |
| EEC | 7.8 | 5.6 |
| European OECD (including EEC) | 5.4 | 5.2 |
| Total OECD | 3.2 | 5.4 |

## Difficulties of Assessment

There are many difficulties in interpreting these figures. The growth rate comparisons are bedevilled with problems of countries with special experiences influencing average performances for groups (e.g. Japan pushes up the OECD average, the growth rate for the USA is affected by whether the base and end years were at times of boom or slump, etc.) The figures quoted indicating little progress towards economic integration depend on judgement as to how long such a process should be expected to take. The figures for inter-industry specialisation are not necessarily decisive—since it has been argued that the EEC has generated instead an increase in intra-industry specialisation (firms within the same industry concentrating on slightly different products e.g. Renault, Fiat and Volkswagen inside the Motor-Car industry). And running through much of the discussion has been a confusion between balance of payments effects and effects on economic welfare. Thus Major, Hays and Grunberger say that there has been little evidence that imports from the outside world are lower than they would otherwise have been, and the White Paper Cmnd 4715 boasts that EEC intra-trade has been 50 per cent higher than it otherwise would have been as a result of the creation of EEC. But, bearing in mind what has been said about trade creation and diversion, what they are both looking for—the increase in intra-trade and the reduction in imports from outside—may be evidence of the effectiveness or otherwise with which the customs union has changed the pattern of trade, without being evidence that this change has been beneficial. It is certainly possible that in increasing intra-trade the EEC countries have reduced trade in the rest of the world below what might otherwise have occurred.

The evidence, of which much use was made by Mr. Jenkins in the July debate, that in EEC intra-trade export prices have risen less than domestic prices, is certainly relevant to the issue of whether the customs union inspires more competition between members. But this was a (probably) selective quoting from cabinet papers which the Government apparently only shows to pro-marketeers. A strong folk-myth paralysing British intellectuals is that there exists in the depths of the Foreign Office a dossier proving that it is correct for us to join the Common Market. The evidence available to lesser mortals is certainly not adequate.

## Special Factors in EEC Growth

In addition to the general post-war factors stimulating trade between industrial countries there were certain special factors favouring EEC countries. White Paper Cmnd 4289 acknowledges the effects of recovery from post-war destruction, and the low levels of arms spending. A good deal of US aid and and investment would have come to Europe whether EEC existed or not. Europe had a supply of surplus farm and immigrant labour that facilitated rapid industrial expansion. Between 1958 and 1968 employment in agriculture in EEC countries fell by 35 per cent compared with only 22 per cent in European OECD as a whole and 25 per cent in the whole of OECD.

Major, Hays and Grunberger feel that the creation of the EEC did lead to a greater willingness to invest by European capitalists, to a greater flow of US investment, and to greater mobility of labour than would otherwise have been the case. Others (e.g. Oppenheimer, National Westminster Bank Review, February 1971) dispute even this. But as a general conclusion Major, Hays and Grunberger say: "It is hard to think that if the dynamic properties of a widening market were really as great as is sometimes suggested the statistical evidence of their influence would be so completely and consistently lacking".

## The Common Agricultural Policy

The Common Market countries could have created a simple Free Trade Area for industrial products but in fact went further and established a Customs Union. Equally they could have made separate national arrangements, as many other industrial countries do, to subsidise their farmers. Very few outside observers can be found who support the Common Agricultural Policy eventually agreed upon. This is trade diversion with a vengence. High common farm prices (retail prices have some variation), and levies to make imports uncompetitive except in times of local shortage have many disadvantages. The European Agricultural Fund Guarantee Section incurs immense expenditures in buying up surplus stocks and subsidising their overseas sale. The policy generates huge surpluses of farm produce in times of good harvests (the past two years have eased matters by producing poorer harvests—but EEC hopes of continued bad harvests cannot be indefinitely fulfilled!), it generates friction with other countries over dumping and restrictions on imports into EEC, it produces inter-EEC disputes (Germany in particular complains of the cost, and fears repercussions on her overseas trade. In the negotiations in March of this year, the Germans and Dutch wanted higher farm prices, the Italians wanted higher spending on agricultural reform, and the French wanted both). In spite of its high cost the policy leaves the farmers dissatisfied. They are

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poor because of the pre-existing backwardness of their farms but even with the CAP their incomes are rising more slowly than those of industrial workers.

The Mansholt Plan, a modified version of which was finally agreed in March this year, aims to switch spending from price support to farm reform—by encouraging farmers to leave agriculture (it aims to take 5 out of 10 million farmers off the land and to take 12 million acres out of cultivation by 1980) and by farm modernisation. This will cause spending on the Guidance Section of the Fund to rise and, hopefully, spending on the Guarantee Section will fall. This latter item rose from £154m. in 1966/7 to £831m. in 1968/9. What happens to it now depends on the extent of activities under the Guidance Section and on the relationship between prices inside the Common Market and in the outside world. Harvest conditions reduced the gap at a convenient time in the past year—whilst the negotiations for enlargement of the EEC were on. But the most sensible guess is that farmers' pressure inside the EEC and productivity trends in the rest of the world (which operate in a free market regime) will widen the gap and hence increase the cost.

The West Germans speak enviously of the British system (now being dismantled) of deficiency payments to farmers. Under the CAP the West Germans, being the biggest food importers, pay the biggest contributions. France as a major food producer receives the biggest benefit. In effect, with West Germany paying over 30 per cent of the total cost and receiving less than 20 per cent of the benefits, and with France paying less than 30 per cent of the cost and receiving over 40 per cent of the benefits, the West Germans pay a fee to the French. The bargain helps to keep France's balance of payments with West Germany in equilibrium. Her grain exports to West Germany rose from $170m. in 1960 to $500m. a few years later, thus financing France's adverse balance in manufacturing goods with West Germany.

## Economic and Monetary Union

The logic of the Common Agricultural Policy requires fixed exchange rates between the member countries since the common prices are expressed in international units. When exchange rates do change the CAP is in jeopardy. (Many British pro-marketeers hope that it will be abandoned as a result of exchange rate crises). In 1969 French devaluation enforced a modification of CAP (a two year levy on exports and subsidy on imports) and German revaluation enforced a four year subsidy on farm exports. In 1971 the German float of the mark has forced the EEC to agree to Government aid to famers if the mark rises more than 2½ per cent above parity with the dollar. Without these measures exchange rate changes would cause violent variations in food prices with consequent prosperity or ruin for farmers. (Even the present fluctuations of ± 1 per cent around parities permitted by IMF rules involve a potential fluctuation of any two currencies against each other of 4 per cent. Hence the EEC countries already operated (prior to the May currency crisis) narrower bands of ± 0.75 per cent around parity and were due to reduce these to ± 0.6 per cent in June had the crisis not intervened).

But to maintain fixed exchange rates is to go a long way towards having just one currency for the whole Union. This means that one major national defence against the effects of economic fluctuations in the outside world has to be abandoned. This, together with other features of the eventual Common Market set up, in particular freedom of capital movements and harmonisation of tax systems, forces the Six to envisage a considerable degree of supra-national control over national economic policies. The Werner Plan aims that by 1980 there shall be complete freedom of movements of capital and labour, and freedom to establish businesses anywhere in the Six countries. There will be total and irreversible convertibility of currencies and irrevocably fixed exchange rates. These measures require in their turn that there shall be at least two supra-national bodies (one to deal with Government economic policy and the other to control the Community central banking system).

Already from January 1971 there were to be three reviews a year of the situation by the Council of Ministers and the Committee of Central Bankers. They will review economic policies, harmonise taxes, co-ordinate financial markets, produce medium term Economic Plans, operate $2,000m. short and medium term stabilisation funds, and work towards the narrowing of the exchange rate margins between the currencies.

Progress is at present temporarily at a standstill since there has been continuous disagreement over the West German decision in May to float the mark. But assuming a Community agreement is reached on concerted action towards the dollar crisis, then progress is envisaged in three stages till final Economic Union in 1980. A major problem, which is due to be resolved in 1973 one way or the other is that the logic of France's demands on the EEC requires that these measures be carried out, but France is unwilling to agree to the setting up of supra-national bodies which she knows would ultimately be dominated by West Germany. Hence the first stage of the Plan is provisional and if agreement is not reached in 1973 on any necessary revisions of the Treaty of Rome, Germany has the right to withdraw from the Medium Term Stabilisation Fund.

Assuming that the Plan does go forward the separate countries will lose many of their present means of controlling their economies. Trouble will

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only be avoided if new supra-national economic bodies are fully capable of handling economic fluctuations in the immensely more complex setting of Six countries. If not, then economic fluctuations will be transmitted without hindrance from one area to another, and tendencies towards a polarisation into rapidly growing and stagnating regions will be intensified. Since capitalist countries have not by any means got perfect control over their own economies, it seems ridiculous to hope that new supra-national bodies can deal with this much greater task. In fact they cannot aspire to the same level of control as that which the separate Governments are giving up, unless the Plan goes much further than envisaged and results in one tax system and one budget for the whole Union. Even in its final stage the Werner Plan will represent a dangerous half-way house for capitalist countries to have reached.

The Werner Plan has implications for international currency stability, to which reference will be made later.

### Other Aspects of the Market

It is not possible for reasons of space to discuss fully many other important aspects of the Common Market. Many of them are mentioned repeatedly in speeches and reports by EEC Commission members when they, the supra-national bureaucracy, are complaining of slow progress towards economic union. The difficulties in removing the so-called "non-tariff barriers" to trade (frontier checks, variations in local taxes, quotas, technical safety and health standards, government procurement policies etc.) are worth mentioning since they emphasise the fact that even when a customs union is complete trade is by no means free. They also spotlight the importance of state power in modern economies—and one incentive that exists to drive countries into economic groupings like the EEC i.e. the fear that their trade might be harmed by antagonistic government regulations by trading partners. Other objects of complaint have been the slowness in setting up European companies, legal obstacles to free establishment of companies in one another's countries, other legal problems such as a common patent system, differences over regional policy, slow progress towards a common transport policy, problems over the harmonisation of social policies, variations in state aids to industry and treatment of nationalised industries, weaknesses in co-operation on research and development and in Euratom, and differing national policies on commercial relations with other countries. There has been progress on some of these recently e.g. a patent agreement has nearly been reached, and the Six have agreed to act together (by 1974) in commercial relations with Eastern Europe.

There are two sides to all this activity. One is the positive work towards technical co-operation, the setting up of European companies etc., on which little progress is reported. The other and much more powerful motivation is the constant watching of one another to ensure that separate governments do not by regulation or subsidy give unfair advantage to their own firms as against those of the other nations. In spite of all the talk of harmonising social policies it must be stressed that wage improvements, social service benefits etc. arise because of pressures on national governments and employers within nation states. The Common Market Commission is far more concerned with clearing the decks for "fair competition". This is bound to be the case because of mutual suspicions amongst the members. Hence we have a paradoxical situation in which a mushrooming bureaucracy spawns the most detailed regulations over economic activity in an effort to play the capitalist rules of the game which in theory require no government regulation whatsoever.

### What is the Common Market?

How is one to make sense of a sequence of events in which to obtain a customs union which may not have given them any economic benefits, the Six permitted themselves to be saddled with the millstone of the Common Agricultural Policy, the risks of the Werner Plan, and the irritations caused by the Brussels bureaucracy?

Whatever the economic pros and cons there are at least three political arguments that were relevant during the years of formation of EEC, and it is not unknown for Governments to accept economic handicaps for political reasons. One was that after the failure of the European Defence Community, this was the way chosen to legitimise Germany as a senior member of the Western Alliance. On a wider scale EEC was intended to become the social and economic infrastructure of NATO (There is a quaint belief that economic integration leads to an improvement in political relationships). Secondly the alliance might serve as a mutual aid club in the event of trouble from national working class movements. Thirdly, and of very powerful relevance to the question of the UK joining, is the fact that economic union amongst capitalist powers is certain to make social reform more difficult. Governments that wish to make changes in their economic systems in a socialist direction, must, if they exist in a capitalist world setting, have all the instruments of economic control available to them, control over banking, capital movements, exchange rates, powers of direction over nationalised industry etc. In the Common Market on the other hand the climate will be towards a uniform application of the capitalist rules of the game. Working class pressure will be more difficult, Government commitment to reform will be less determined, if the economy is unable to

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resist the naked force of foreign competition. The facts that wages have risen in EEC and that certain social insurance benefits are now better than those in the UK may be causes for Socialists to ponder on the reasons for the relative prosperity of the capitalist system, but they have nothing to do with socialism.

As for the economic arguments, one hypothesis not to be lightly dismissed (especially possibly in relation to the present British Government) is that sometimes capitalist governments have no clear idea of what they are doing. They thought and maybe still do, that the Treaty of Rome would bring major economic benefits. But of course one must ask for whom the benefits were intended. Here an attractively simple hypothesis is that the Common Market governments were acting as the creatures of the big capitalists for whom the big integrated market is the most favourable economic environment. This is clearly a very powerful factor which will become more and more manifest as time goes on. But to over-stress it would lead to a failure to characterise the present situation correctly. Economic and political integration take a long time. The slow and uncertain nature of the progress towards integration so far in the EEC and the doubts as to the economic results of the customs union emphasise this. It would be wrong to conjure up a picture of big business in alliance with the Brussels supra-national bureaucracy reducing to impotence the separate national governments. Everywhere state power is increasing.

A good deal of the specific shape that the EEC has assumed is to be explained by haggling and compromises between member states. A simple free trade area could have included the UK and the rest of EFTA but would have permitted the member states to purchase their food from overseas sources instead of from Europe. A simple customs union would quickly have been dominated by West Germany as the major industrial power. The CAP (and aid to overseas territories) were concessions wrung by France. France gains an agricultural market. For West Germany the prospect of playing an eventual dominant role in the Union makes the fee seem worth-while. Inside the Union the dismantling of tariffs intensifies the demands by firms for other protectionist measures by their national state organs. The Brussels bureaucracy needs to be all the bigger the more tenacious are Governments in holding on to detailed powers of regulation. Brussels faces its major tasks in the reconciling of national interests. As yet the Common Market has less the aspect of a supra-national state than of an alliance of separate nation states fiercely competing with each other, an alliance which will have many partial breakdowns as time goes on. No simple model will describe the relationships between nation states, the internal forces acting on them, and the supra-national organs created between them.

But further discussion of the Common Market must refer to its international setting.

## The EEC and Underdeveloped Countries

The trends in world trade and investment referred to earlier mean that the traditional fields of imperialist trade and investment in the underdeveloped countries have become less central. The formation of the EEC with its restrictive trading regulations, and its concentration on intra-EEC trade might have been expected to intensify these trends. But firstly it is not easy to sort out the impact on the underdeveloped countries of the EEC as such from the impact that would have been made by the Six countries separately. Secondly the impact is rather different from what might have been expected.

On the second of these points the Six, not having the tradition of overseas investment that the UK and USA have had, might have been expected to contribute to an overall reduction in overseas investment as a bigger proportion of the world's resources came into their hands. But in fact their totals of aid and investment in underdeveloped countries grew rapidly in the 1960's till by 1969 their combined total exceeded that of the USA (For comparison Japan's total also grew rapidly).

| *Aid & Investment* (Millions of Dollars) | 1960 | 1969 | *% of GNP* (1969) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Belgium | 182 | 257 | 1.1 |
| France | 1325 | 1742 | 1.24 |
| Germany | 628 | 2046 | 1.3 |
| Italy | 298 | 848 | 1.03 |
| Netherlands | 239 | 369 | 1.32 |
| Japan | 246 | 1263 | 0.78 |
| UK | 881 | 1069 | 0.83 |
| USA | 3818 | 4645 | 0.49 |

(Source: OECD *Development Assistance, 1970 Review*).

Also, probably because of the relative stagnation of the US and UK economies, trade between EEC and the underdeveloped countries was relatively buoyant. Between 1953 and 1964 EEC countries' imports from underdeveloped countries grew at 5.1 per cent p.a. compared with 1.6 per cent p.a. for US imports and 2.8 per cent p.a. by EFTA. Between 1958-69 imports from underdeveloped countries into EEC rose to a rate of increase of 7.1 per cent p.a. EEC exports to underdeveloped countries grew more slowly, so that the EEC have had a trade deficit with them, thus facilitating the finance of the underdeveloped countries' trade deficit with Japan and USA. By the mid 1960's Latin America sold 22 per cent of its exports to EEC compared with 14 per cent in the mid 1950's, and Africa sold 52 per cent compared with 41 per cent. Trade has been growing quite rapidly between EEC and members of the Commonwealth. For instance the UK's share of Nigeria's trade fell from 69 per cent to 42 per cent

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whilst the EEC's rose from 17 per cent to 36 per cent between 1955 and 1965.

There is no doubt that the Six have been quite active in the ex-colonies, both collectively and individually. Collectively their aid to the eighteen African states associated with them under the Yaoundé Agreements has been less than the aid given by separate members of the Six to underdeveloped countries. The first European Development Fund totalled $581m. between 1959-64, the second totalled $730m. between 1964-1969 and the third (1970-74) will come to $918m. But whatever might be said on other issues of the impact of the creation of the EEC as compared with the impact of the Six separately, it does seem that in relationships with the ex-colonies their collective existence has been important. Collective neo-colonialism is a fact.

The Association (Yaoundé) Treaties with the eighteen African States involve Community Institutions, aid, duty free entry into EEC for primary products, reverse preferences for EEC manufactures and the right of establishment of EEC firms in the African countries. The aid which was partly a taking over of previous French colonial obligations has been overwhelmingly for intrastructure (in its widest sense). The 18 have many complaints about the results of the bargain. They want more aid for industry. Their trade with the Six has grown much more slowly than that of other underdeveloped countries. They would like guaranteed prices for their primary products along the lines of CAP. And each time the Six offer a new concession to another set of countries the privileges of the 18 are reduced in value (e.g. this year's reductions in EEC tariffs on cocoa, coffee and palm oil). And the EEC are actively spreading their net. Several of the Commonwealth countries will perforce reach an accommodation with them whether the UK joins EEC or not. The East African Countries already have the Arusha (1969) agreement. The EEC felt able to go ahead (on July 1st) more rapidly and more comprehensively than the UK or the USA with their offer of Global Preferences on manufactures and semi-manufactures from underdeveloped countries. By their very nature these will be of minimal value to the African Associates.

## The EEC and World Trade

The EEC have concluded agreements ranging from Association agreements with eventual full membership in mind down to straight trading agreements with almost all the countries of the Mediterranean area. If the UK joins and the EFTA countries reach some sort of agreement with EEC, there will be a major trading and neo-colonialist bloc stretching almost from the Arctic Ocean to South Africa with offshoots elsewhere. Even without the UK they are the world's largest trading group. Again, most of the growth in trade would probably have occurred anyway, but it does seem that the creation of EEC institutions has introduced a new element into world trading relationships. The propensity to conclude association agreements has certainly gone to the point where the spirit of the GATT is infringed. The Americans complain bitterly about the "reverse preferences" granted by the African countries, and about the agreements with Mediterranean countries. They object to many other EEC practices too—VAT rebates on exports, certain "non-tariff barriers", and above all the restrictive effect which the Common Agricultural Policy has on their farm exports. The EEC in turn of course complain of many US practices.

For two years prior to the current dollar crisis there were frequent press headlines about an impending "Trade War". The various drafts of last year's Mills Bill would have given the US government power to put quotas on imports of shoes, textiles and clothing, and other items whose US producers could claim to be in trade difficulties. GATT was persuaded to set up committees on non-tariff barriers to trade, and this year an OECD study group on trade problems has been meeting.

But most of these issues arise because of the general difficulties of the US economy faced with world-wide competition. The original impetus to the Mills Bill was the threat of cheap Japanese textiles. An uneasy situation has existed in which many foreign steel producers could sell more steel in the US (where half the capacity is idle) but instead accept voluntary limitations. The same is true of shoes and clothing. An indication of changing world competitive strengths is that West German total exports were half of those of the US in 1958 and are now around two-thirds. Japanese competition is a major menace to the US[2].

In fact until recently the boom conditions in the Six have meant that their imports from the rest of the world have rapidly increased. In spite of US complaints, her exports to EEC have increased during the past 10 years rapidly, and 20 per cent of her exports go there. The trade restricting nature of the Common Market has not yet been fully revealed. But its institutional nature would be likely to result in a trade war becoming more destructive than would otherwise be the case should there be a slowdown inside the Six. Apart from restrictions on agricultural imports, EEC dumping of farm produce can be very damaging. For instance this practice will probably destroy the International Sugar Agreement if the UK joins, (bearing in mind the fact that Australian

[2] The import surcharge announced by President Nixon on August 16 has of course brought the whole situation to the boil. A reduction of Japanese exports to USA will bring increased Japanese competition to Europe.

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sugar is excluded from the offer made to other members of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement). There was much fear of a world trade slump because of insufficient reserves during 1967-8. Since then, the creation of SDR's, the two tier system, the continued toleration of rising dollar balances, a rise in gold output, etc., have all meant that world reserves have been a permissive factor in inflation instead. The inward looking origins of the EEC and their accumulation of balance of payments surpluses might have been expected to contribute strongly to the forces making for slump, and still might. But during the later 1960's the EEC countries appeared to be turning towards a more aggressively outward looking policy in trade and investment. The figures of flows to underdeveloped countries have been mentioned. Net long term private capital investment abroad by Germany rose five times between 1967 and 1969 by which year it exceeded that of the USA (though the positions were reversed again in 1970).

Although the strength of the Six is basically due to the strength of their separate economies, they nowadays, backed by their Common External Tariff, act together in trading negotiations. That makes their collective voice very powerful in, say, GATT negotiations. Not that they are always unanimous. The Germans and Dutch are less enamoured than are the French over those EEC practices which protect European agriculture and preserve exclusive trading relations with the Associates, and which might provoke US trade retaliation.

## World Currency Relationships

The United States certainly encouraged the formation of the EEC, as part of its grand alliance, but the increasingly antagonistic noises made by the US and the EEC towards one another in recent years provoke questioning as to their real relationship. Is it now, whatever may have been the case in the 1950's, to be regarded as a rival capitalist grouping challenging United States' power?

While there is plenty of evidence in the monetary history of the past 10 years of the other powers seeking to exercise a more independent role, nevertheless, taking the post-war period as a whole (the work of the IMF, the collective efforts to keep the UK afloat in the 1960's, the Two Tier gold system in 1968, the inauguration of SDR's in 1970, etc.), it seems that, while they grumble, they still come into line with America's requirements. The Vietnam War has been fought, the US has invested large amounts abroad and has indulged in inflation at home and in the late 1960's the dollar was more secure than ever as the world's trading and reserve currency. Foreigners accumulate dollars and thus finance America's deficits (over $30b. cumulative deficit in 20 years). The measure of America's success in this respect is that the rates of foreign dollar holdings to US gold reserves rose from $19b.: $20b. in 1958 to $33b.: $12b. in 1968 and is apparently nearer to $50b.: $10b. today.

Clearly by 1970-71 this state of affairs had gone too far. The American solution to the problem of the weakness of the dollar has been for the past year or so to try to secure a revaluation of certain other currencies, particularly the West German mark and the Japanese yen, thus gaining trading advantages whilst not disturbing the dollar's reserve currency role. It is here that the potential importance of EEC institutions shows through. The internal necessities which enforce closer alignment of exchange rates mean that the power of several strong currencies could be brought to bear against the dollar. If a major bloc of currencies commit themselves to monetary union, then bearing in mind their huge collective reserves, they are bound to appear as an attractive alternative for reserve currency purposes. By pooling their reserves they cut down on the need for dollar holdings in their central banks. By collective action against dollar inflows they could cause severe difficulties for the American practice whereby overseas expenditure is financed by an increase in foreigners' dollar holdings.

Three questions arise. Firstly will the Six act together in this way i.e. will the Werner Plan proceed? The West German decision to float the mark in May 1971 was against the wishes of the other members, though at least this time they did consult their partners unlike 1969 when they unilaterally revalued. This time the EEC Commission would have preferred a batch of exchange controls. Ever since then the French and the West Germans have been arguing over whether they can either persuade the Germans to agree on appropriate controls or whether they can all agree before the next IMF meeting to a procedure whereby all the Six' currencies float together. An upward float harms exports and the French franc and the Italian lira might not be able to float upwards in step with the mark. Secondly, strong as the Six are, are they yet strong enough? If they revalued, and Japan did not, then their trade would suffer all the more. And America is not weakened in the way that the UK was in the 1960's. To aspire to reserve currency status would involve a very protracted period in which currencies are fully convertible with those of the outside world. Long before upward movements of other currencies have succeeded in destroying the standing of the dollar, the Americans may well bring their payments deficit under control (assisted by those same upward movements). Thirdly do they want to challenge the dollar? Until the dollar balances have melted away those countries that hold them have an interest in their value. At a more fundamental level the existence of more than one reserve currency centre might

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cause unacceptable dangers to the economic and political cohesion of the Western Alliance.[3]

**International Capital**

To the extent that the USA is buying up European industry then at least one section of US capital will be unworried by European competition. US investment abroad rose from $11b. in 1949 to $59b. in 1967 by which date US sales from overseas production were 2.6 times US exports. US investments in Western Europe (including the UK) were 15 per cent of the total of US overseas investments in 1950 and 30 per cent in 1969. (US investment in UK is, in relation to population, much greater than US investment in EEC).

It is an attractive notion to find the rationale of the Common Market in the requirements of the international firm, big enough to free itself from the constraints of national origins. International investment is not just US investment. UK firms invest in EEC. European capital invests in USA. International firms can circumvent national exchange controls, ignore government export policies, escape exchange regulations, avoid taxation, speculate in currency movements, have their own sources of finance, exercise political influence in "host" countries. Alongside the international firm has grown up an international finance system free from national labels, the Eurodollar market fed by overseas dollar balances and the Euro-bond market for long-term borrowing. These markets grew up after the UK placed restrictions on the international use of sterling in 1957 and after the US strengthened its banking controls during the 1960's i.e. they were a means of escape from national regulation.

The Common Market had very little directly to do with the creation of the Euro-market structure, (its centre is in London). But it is argued that the incipient supra-national institutions of the EEC are the kind of framework needed by international firms and international finance. One reason why the Eurodollar market grew up was that existing European capital markets were weakly developed. The Werner Plan aims to alter the financial environment in which economic activity is conducted, just as the customs union alters the economic environment.

One would not wish to dispute the power of these influences. As to whether the international firm needs the Common Market it might be said that it is already doing quite well in a world of national economic frontiers. Its rate of growth of output and geographical spread of investment are not noticeably constrained. It can insure against, and profit by, national tariff differences and exchange rate variations. But the main objection to a dramatic view of the relationship between international firm and supranational institutions is that it obscures the complex relationships that exist between capitalist organisations and the national state apparatus, which, as has been pointed out earlier, is still increasing in power.

On a related point it is quite true that movements of international funds can cause severe difficulties for national economic policy. But governments are not helpless. Central Banks are the chief operators in the foreign currency markets. There is nothing inevitable about the inflationary impact of an inflow of dollars into Europe. (Dollars flowed into West Germany in 1970, the German money supply rose by 23 per cent over the year, and prices rose, But a part of the blame rests with the German firms who wished to borrow the dollars and were allowed to do so). Since the crisis of May 1971 all the main West European countries have used various packages of measures to control the dollar inflow (e.g. exchange controls, reserve requirements and zero interest rates on banks' dollar balances, two tier systems for currency usage etc.) There have been disagreements over the proposals of the EEC Commission and dissatisfaction with West Germany's measures. It is also no doubt true that it is difficult to deal with the Euro-dollar market unless all centres adopt similar controls at the same time, otherwise business will move around in search of freedom. But to assume that nation states are helpless in these matters is to detract attention from the reasons why they do, or do not, use the powers they possess.

The best description of the nature of international capitalist rivalry is, up to now at any rate, one couched in terms of national labels. In these terms it does seem that US capital is facing an increasingly serious challenge from the various European capitals. It may be confusing, but ought not to be surprising, that the Western Alliance survives politically but suffers from increasing economic strains. So far the strength of the Six derives from the separate strengths of its members. As an institution the EEC becomes a factor to be reckoned with as an expression of the alliance of the Six. Economic integration may make it something more, but the process will be punctuated by many internal struggles for competitive position between the separate members. Capitalism being what it is, the successful creation of regional supranational organs will probably increase rather than decrease the instability of the system, both internally and in the world as a whole.

[3] The events following President Nixon's August 16 measures reveal to the full the difficulties the EEC countries have in agreeing to concerted action. It must be admitted that this is a very severe test of their capacity to agree since not only have they the difficulties of assessing Japanese competition (and exchange rate intentions) as well as American competition, but the import surcharge throws out any exchange rate calculations which they might have made on the basis of normal trading patterns.

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# Why Does Art Outlive its Origins? (Part I)

Jeremy Hawthorn

Attacks on Marxism which have argued that Marxists consistently devalue human experience by "subordinating" it to "mere" social and economic factors have frequently mentioned the fact that this is nowhere better seen than in Marxist attitudes towards the arts. Marxists, so the argument runs, deny that there are any absolute, unchanging human qualities and reject the idea of an unchanging human nature as a bourgeois falsification, and yet are unable satisfactorily to explain why it is that the art of the past has often the power to elicit an admiring response from those belonging to a totally different society from that in which the work of art in question was produced. The non-Marxist has his own relatively simple explanation for this phenomenon. Man changes as history progresses, but only in externals, not in essentials. It is to these essentials, to an unchanging core of "human nature", that great art appeals, and because of this it does not date.

The classic expression of this argument can be found in the eighteenth century, when human nature and custom are frequently compared to the human body and the dress it wears. The former is constant, the latter temporary and changeable. Thus Sir Joshua Reynolds regrets that

> Art is not yet in so high estimation with us, as to obtain so great a sacrifice as the ancients made, especially the Grecians, who suffered themselves to be represented naked, whether they were generals, law-givers or kings.[1]

T. S. Eliot, two centuries later, gives advice to the reader of poetry which is based on essentially the same principles:

> What matters most, let us say, in reading an ode of Sappho, is not that I should imagine myself to be an island Greek of 2,500 years ago; what matters is the experience which is the same for all human beings of different centuries and languages capable of enjoying poetry, the spark which can leap across those 2,500 years.[2]

[1] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Seventh *Discourse*.
[2] T. S. Eliot, *The Frontiers of Criticism*.

## Marx's Early Approach

Now interestingly enough Marx himself at one time concerned himself with this question of why art outlived its origins. In what is now referred to as the (originally unpublished) "Introduction" to the *Critique of Political Economy*, which was replaced by the (published) Preface, he dealt with two main problems.[3] Firstly that

> It is well known that certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organisation.[4]

Marx's answer to this particular problem does not immediately concern us, except in as much as it leads to the second problem. After pointing out that the myths on which Greek or Elizabethan art are dependent are in fact linked to the societies in which they are found, making the production of Greek art in the age of automatic machinery, railways and locomotives impossible, Marx continues

> But the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social development. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment.[5]

This difficulty is answered by Marx in the following way:

> A man cannot become a child again unless he becomes childish. But does he not enjoy the artless

[3] See the account of the publishing history in *Marx, Engels and the Poets* by Peter Demetz; Chicago and London 1967, p. 242. Demetz uses the term "Foreword" for what has traditionally been translated as the "Preface" in English, and I have retained the latter nomenclature. See also Maurice Dobb's comments in the new edition of the *Critique* published by Lawrence and Wishart this year. I was unable to obtain this new translation in time to use it for this article, and have taken my translation from *Literature and Art* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, New York, 1947.
[4] Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy*.
[5] ditto

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> ways of the child and must he not strive to reproduce its truth on a higher plane? Is not the character of every epoch revived perfectly true to nature in child nature? Why should the social childhood of mankind, where it had obtained its most beautiful development, not exert an eternal charm as an age that will never return? There are ill-bred children and precocious children. Many of the ancient nations belong to the latter class. The Greeks were normal children. The charm their art has for us does not conflict with the primitive character of the social order from which it had sprung. It is rather the product of the latter, and is rather due to the fact that the unripe social conditions under which the art arose and under which it alone could appear could never return.[6]

## The "Preface"

Marx never published this "Introduction", and substituted for it the later Preface which stresses more directly the dependence of men's consciousnesses upon their social being:

> The mode of production in material life determines the social, political, and intellectual life processes in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.[7]

This shift of emphasis has been noted with much satisfaction by non-Marxists who have seen in it proof that Marx recognised that he had earlier failed to explain why art did outlive its origins, and had thus fallen back on "economic determinism". In his book *Marx, Engels, and the Poets* Peter Demetz claims that the later Preface is a "dogmatic formulation" which is in contrast to earlier expositions. He also argues that in the earlier "Introduction" too, "Marx, the friend of literature, finds himself . . . in open revolt against Marx, the theoretician".[8] However, it is necessary to remind ourselves that even in the later Preface, Marx argues that

> With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is *more or less* rapidly transformed.[9] (my emphasis.)

However, having made this point, it still needs to be said I think that although there is no real evidence for Marx the lover of literature giving in to Marx the dogmatic economist, the earlier explanation for the power of art to outlive its social origins is not totally satisfactory. It may well be that Marx's failure to publish the argument is evidence that he himself accepted this. Ernst Fischer, in his book *The Necessity of Art*, draws attention to one aspect of Marx's argument which is disputable:

> Today we may doubt whether, compared to other nations, the ancient Greeks were "normal children". Indeed, in another connection Marx and Engels themselves drew attention to the problematic aspects of the Greek world with its contempt for work, its degradation of women, its eroticism reserved solely for courtesans and boys.[10]

But in addition to this one cannot help contrasting the rather patronising comparison of Greek art with the "charm" of children on the one hand, and the far more complimentary description of Greek art as ". . . the standard and model beyond attainment". Further to this, one has to add that Marx's comment that the character of every epoch is "revived perfectly true to nature in child nature", suggests that "inner" core of "unchanging human nature" which Demetz and others are surely right to categorise as alien to the basic premises of Marxism. Elsewhere in his "Introduction", Marx's argument can be categorised as resting on an "inclusion" theory; primitive society contains in embryo much that remains, albeit in a more sophisticated form, in later societies. We respond to Greek art, then, because we have elements in our society analgous to elements in Greek society. This argument is by no means clear however, as in his comments on "an age that will never return" there seems little possibility of certain aspects of the age being maintained.

## The "Inclusion" Theory

Christopher Caudwell, in his *Studies in a Dying Culture*, also adopts a variant of this "inclusion" theory to explain the same problem as exercises the mind of Marx:

> All art is produced by this tension between changing social relations and outmoded consciousness. The very reason why new art is created, why the old art does not satisfy either the artist or appreciator, is because it seems somehow out of gear with the present. Old art always has meaning for us, because the instincts, the source of the affects, do not change, because a new system of social relations does not exclude but includes the old, and because new art too includes the traditions of the art that has gone before.[11]

The key problem in this formulation of Caudwell's is the tension between the statement that the old art does not satisfy "either artist or appreciator", and the one that follows shortly afterwards that "Old art always has meaning for us". The distinction

[6] Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy*.
[7] Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*.
[8] Demetz, *op cit*, p. 71.
[9] Preface to *Critique*.
[10] Ernst Fischer, *The Necessity of Art*, Penguin ed. p. 11.
[11] Christopher Caudwell, *Studies in a Dying Culture*, reprint, 1948, p. 54.

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between "satisfying" and "having meaning" is by no means clear; does Caudwell mean that old art "has meaning" for us but does not "satisfy" us? If so, his position would seem to be further from Marx's than at first appeared, where it is pretty obvious that for Marx Greek art not only has meaning for us but satisfies us too. This apart, the basic objection that Demetz makes, that Marxists cannot both argue that Being determines Consciousness, and then adhere to a conception of consciousness which includes past consciousness irrespective of changes in the socio-economic base, is still valid. Caudwell's mention of unchanging instincts is also highly suspect, and has the appearance of being an ill-considered import from then current psychology. Fischer's mention of the "magic" inherent in all good art seems to me equally dubious. (He too brings in the "inclusion" theory; "Ancient, apparently long-forgotten things are preserved within us, continue to work upon us—often without realising it. . . .'[12] Again, one suspects the influence of psychological and archetypal critical theories here.) Neither Caudwell nor Fischer can explain why their instincts and magic do not result in the same sort of art being *produced*, and Caudwell's assertion that new art "includes the traditions of the old" is very much of a half-truth. In what sense does drama "contain" the traditions of Greek drama? Very often literary development involves a definite rejection of past standards.

## "A Moment of Humanity"

However, Fischer does say some other interesting things about the lasting value of art:

> . . . all art is conditioned by time, and represents humanity in so far as it corresponds to the ideas and aspirations, the needs and hopes of a particular historical situation. But, at the same time, art goes beyond this limitation and, within the historical moment, also creates a moment of humanity, promising constant development.
>
> . . . constant features of mankind are captured even in time-conditioned art. In so far as Homer, Aeschylus, and Sophocles mirrored the simple conditions of a society based on slavery, they are time-bound and out of date. But in so far as, in that society, they discovered the greatness of man, gave artistic form to his conflicts and passions, and hinted at his infinite potentiality, they remain as modern as ever.[13]

Fischer's assumption that in our use of the word "humanity" we presuppose certain constant elements in man's makeup is similar to the argument put forward by Lucien Goldmann in his book *The Hidden God:*

> A philosophy or work of art can keep its value outside the time or place where it first appeared only if, by expressing a particular human situation, it transposes this on to the plane of the great human problems created by man's relationships with his fellows and with the universe. Now since the number of coherent replies that can be given to these problems is limited by the very structure of the human personality, each of the replies given may correspond to different or even contradictory historical situations.[14]

Goldman's phrase about the "great human problems", and his mention of the "human personality" are not very happily expressed, for there are no absolute human problems and there is not such a thing as "the human personality" out of time or place. But Fischer's phrase "a moment of humanity" is more satisfactory, capturing as it does the implication that this is both time-limited and representative of something constant. It is not so much a matter of present society (and consciousness) "including" past society and consciousness, but more of our ability to recognise that within a particular historical situation certain things presented mankind with the possibility of moving towards and achieving a better state, and we admire the commitment of those prepared to associate themselves with these forces. Thus although, as Marx says, the Goddess Fame disappears in a society which contains Printing House Square,[15] we can recognise what the Goddess Fame meant for a society of the past and admire the imagination that created and developed the vision.

Later on in *The Hidden God*, Goldmann returns to the same question, and presents us with a slightly different solution from before:

> . . . if the social factors which determine the success of a book immediately after its publication, during the author's lifetime and for a few years after his death, are both highly numerous and largely accidental . . . these all eventually disappear, and leave only one factor. This continues to act more or less indefinitely, although it can and does vary in intensity: it is the fact that, in certain works of the past, men rediscover what they themselves think and feel in a confused and obscure manner today.[16]

It seems to me to be wrong to suggest that we *discover* what we think and feel by reference to the literature of the past, for this again suggests by implication that what men think and feel does not vary from generation to generation. But the suggestion that is helpful here is that our response to the

[12] Fischer, *op cit*, p. 12.
[13] Fischer, *op cit*, pp. 12 and 13.
[14] Lucien Goldmann, *The Hidden God*, London 1964, p. 20.
[15] Introduction to *Critique*.
[16] Goldmann, *op cit*, p. 315.

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literature of the past involves a complex relationship between our own consciousness, dependent on our social basis, and the consciousness and society of the past from which the work of literature comes. It is not the same "response" which a work like *Hamlet* produces from age to age, rather the particular consciousness of one age can examine its own problems by comparing and contrasting them with those of another age.

It is worth remembering that even with the examples Marx gives—Greek drama and Elizabethan drama—different ages have found very different things to praise. Samuel Johnson could prefer the rewritten *King Lear* with the happy ending to the original version. In other words, part of the problem is resolved when we realise that a continuously admiring response to the same art over a period of time does not mean an unchanging response; there is a dialectical relationship between the consciousness of the appreciator and the consciousness of the artist. We go on admiring the art of the past not because we are basically the same, but because in many ways we are different.

**The Problem of Continuity**

This is not to deny that in human life there are elements of continuity. We know from modern experience that the achievement of socialism in a country does not result in an instant change in human nature, although we also know that certain changes very often do take place very quickly.

Engels pointed out that changes in the superstructure did not follow changes in the base in a mechanical fashion, but in a dialectical way. Different parts of a society assume a semi-autonomous identity, within which there is a pressure on constituent elements for internal consistency which has a determining factor on the way change takes place. Talking of law, Engels noted that:

> In a modern state, law must not only correspond to the general economic position and be its expression, but must also be an expression which is *consistent in itself*, and which does not, owing to internal contradictions, look glaringly inconsistent. And in order to achieve this, the faithful reflection of economic conditions is more and more infringed upon.[17]

However, it is hard to believe that Engels is talking of anything other than a short-term consistency within the context of a particular society. Legal systems may enjoy brief flirtations with internal consistency, but if the flirtation becomes an affair then societies usually begin divorce proceedings. It seems to me that this sort of consistency is really a confusion of the main issue. No-one denies that there are elements of continuity in human life; cavemen and modern men share the same number of limbs and similar physical needs. The problem is that art often appears to be linked with far less basic elements in human life, which Marxists might suppose would lose their power to interest and attract us after a gap of several centuries. As I have already suggested, I think that part of the problem is solved if we realise that our use of a simple word like "response" to describe our relationship with the art of the past conceals an immensely complicated network of relationships with that art. "Response" does not imply "identity resting on similarity", but a whole range of relationships which include both recognition of the similar and the dissimilar. To complicate matters further, the similar and the dissimilar are often dialectically linked. We know that a thing cannot be examined in isolation; the real identity of a person, or physical object is not an abstractable thing; Lukacs quotes Marx on precisely this point:

> A negro is a negro. He only becomes a slave in certain circumstances. A cotton-spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. Only in certain circumstances does it become capital. Torn from those circumstances it is no more capital than gold is money or sugar the price of sugar.[18]

But although we recognise that identity alters according to context, we also recognise a continuity, or a dialectical relationship between the object as one thing and the object as another.

Thus a poetic form, a literary convention may continue to be used by different writers over a period of time when large social changes take place. The form or convention in one sense changes because it exists in different contexts, but in another sense it maintains a certain identity which allows us to recognise the familiar when we see it. We can reduce this from a form to a single word. No-one doubts that the meaning of words is a dynamic, not a static thing, and that the way in which the meaning of a word changes is linked to the socio-economic base. The significance of the family in our society and the society of Shakespeare differs. Thus it is hardly a matter of dispute that the meaning of, say, the word "mother" is not the same in our society as it was in Shakespeare's society. Yet when we read the word "mother" in a play of Shakespeare's, we know that aspects of its meaning are the same as or analogous to the meaning that the word has for us. Our "response" to this word is thus a complex business when we read it in a play of

[17] Frederick Engels, letter to Conrad Schmidt, Oct. 27, 1890. Translation from *Literature and Art*.

[18] Georg Lukacs, "What is Orthodox Marxism", in *History and Class Consciousness*, London 1971, p. 13. The quotation is from Marx's *Wage Labour and Capital*.

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Shakespeare's. We hold in our mind the meaning that the word has for us, but remember the sort of society in which Shakespeare was writing. (The work forces us to do this to a certain extent.)

Immersion in the literature of a past age allows us to effect this process more and more rapidly and unconsciously, so that we build up the mental capacity to "respond" to words in a way that cuts out inapposite meanings and introduces meanings, connotative or denotative, which were operative at the time the play in question was written. We do not do this simply in terms of historical adjustment; I. A. Richards and William Empson have shown how this process takes place even in the reading of contemporary literature.[19]

## Changing Identity

In practice, Marxists have recognised this fact in the sort of literary criticism that they have produced, insisting upon the need to understand the sort of society in which a particular work of literature was produced. Reading a book like George Thomson's *Aeschylus and Athens*, or Arnold Kettle's book on the novel, does not just allow us to understand our response to Greek art or the nineteenth-century novel, it allows us to respond more fully and more accurately. It is not, as some who have given grudging assent to the need for historical knowledge have argued, merely a stripping off of inessentials to get back to that unchanging core of human nature, but an attempt to understand what human nature was at the time the art in question was produced. (If human nature really were unchanging then art, not to say life, would be exquisitely boring.)

However, I come back again to the point I made earlier, that artistic response involves a complex interrelation of forces to which our own time-conditioned consciousnesses contribute. Caudwell says on one occasion that, "The poem is what happens when it is read",[20] and though like most epigrammatic definitions of poetry this one has obvious weaknesses, it reminds us that the reader, as much as the work, exists in a certain time at a certain place, and is conditioned accordingly.

Thus a work of literature has a continuity through history, but it does not have an unchanging identity, for *what* it is depends on *where* it is just as much as it does for Marx's spinning-jenny. The vantage point of our own consciousness and social conditioning is something that we cannot, and should not want to lose—however much we talk of "projecting" ourselves into the mind of a past age. Time travel is not a viable concept in this context, and learning what "mother" meant for an Elizabethan is not the same as having this meaning, with its infinitely complex body of connotations and associations, flash upon the mind with the immediacy of a contemporary meaning. Wellek and Warren, in their *Theory of Literature*, express this well:

> It is simply not possible to stop being men of the twentieth century while we engage in a judgement of the past: we cannot forget the associations of our language, the newly-acquired attitudes, the impact and import of the last centuries. We cannot become contemporary readers of Homer or Chaucer or members of the audience of the theatre of Dionysius in Athens or of the Globe in London. There will always be a decisive difference between an act of imaginative reconstruction and actual participation in a past point of view. . . .[21]

This is not a truth to literature and the arts of course. We will never ever "exhaust" the significance of, say, the Russian Revolution, because our lives are constantly changing, and as changed people we find new significance in what happened in 1917. Wellek and Warren make this point about *Hamlet*, arguing that if we could see it as the Elizabethan playgoer saw it, we would impoverish the play as we would lose legitimate meanings found in the play by subsequent generations. This seems another way of saying that our response to literature involves an imaginative dialectical relationship between our historical perception of the significance of *Hamlet* to an Elizabethan audience, and our own consciousness rooted in our contemporary situation. The critic Helen Gardner, who although anything but a Marxist, could never be accused of not taking the historical conditioning of consciousness into account, writes about what we find in *Hamlet* as follows:

> That the answers we find are conditioned by our own circumstances does not destroy their value. *Hamlet* is not a problem to which a final solution exists. It is a work of art about which questions can always be asked. Each generation asks its own questions and finds its own answers, and the final test of the validity of those answers can only be time.[22]

## Identity and Autonomy

It will be seen that we are in part working towards a solution of our initial problem. The work of art is not a frozen piece of outdated consciousness, it is a mediator between the consciousness of the past and the consciousness of the present. Georg Lukacs in fact argues that a modern reader, with

[19] In particular in *Principles of Literary Criticism*, London 1924, and *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, London 1930.

[20] Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*, reprint, London 1946, p. 32.

[21] Rene Wellek and Austen Warren, *Theory of Literature*, Peregrine ed., p. 42.

[22] Helen Gardner, *The Business of Criticism*, reprint, London 1966, p. 51.

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the understanding of the world given to him by dialectical materialism, can understand the great work of the past better than those for whom it was produced:

> . . . an Aeschylus or a Shakespeare draw pictures of family life that provide us with such penetrating and authentic portraits of the social upheavals of their age that it is only now, with the aid of historical materialism, that it has become at all possible for theory to do justice to these artistic insights.[23]

In case this should seem an example of Marxist extremism, one can point to the same argument in a non-Marxist critic like W. K. Wimsatt, who states baldly that "Shakespeare has more meaning and value now than he had in his own day".[24] So long as we also remember that there is inevitably some loss of meaning, then I see no reason to disagree with this line of argument. John Gross, in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* points out that the experience of the concentration camps has made a novel like Kafka's *The Trial* more relevant now than it was when written; certainly it would seem that the situation of a novelist like Kafka may be highly atypical in his own society, but society may change in such a way as makes his vision and experience more relevant than it was in his lifetime. The one theory of art that a Marxist must be committed to oppose is that which sees the work of art as totally autonomous, as does the American New Criticism.[25] It seems necessary however to stress that the work of art, although it lacks an autonomy, does not lack an identity; the difference seems to me to be crucial, for identity implies continuity without stasis, as much when it is applied to a work of art as when it is applied to a human being. It is indicative that the American New Critics, in some ways representative of the classic bourgeois desire to abstract art from its social context, view with horror the suggestion that the reader can, and must, contribute his own experience to artistic response. The "Chicago" critic, Elder Olsen, argues as follows:

> Surely the ultimate consequence of such assumptions must be either that the poem becomes a mere stimulus to independent poetic activities on the part of the reader—that is, the reader becomes the true poet. . . .[26]

I think that Helen Gardner disposes of the purist pretentions of the "New Critics" very effectively, arguing that although they pretended to be ignorant of all biographical and historical fact they were in effect importing a large amount of such knowledge into their allegedly "by itself" interpretation of the work of literature.[27] In the same way one can argue that they were importing their own knowledge of their life and times in the way that Olsen claims to be horrified by.

## Pattern of Process

However, in addition to the points of approach to this problem that I have already mentioned, I think that we could profitably return to a consideration of the old bugbear of art and absolute truth. Now in one form the concept of absolute truth is the first article of faith for the bourgeois critic. And quite rightly Marxists have argued that it is a fundamentally mistaken theory, which denies the essential truth that men and their consciousnesses change in the same way that all things change. But curiously enough, this leads us back to another sort of absolute truth. I quote from *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism:*

> There are no permanently fixed, ossified things in the world, only things undergoing change, processes. This means that nowhere is there absolute rest, a state that would preclude motion. There is only relative rest. . . . Only motion is absolute, without exceptions.[28]

Not only do Marxists believe that motion is an absolute, but also that the nature of motion—dialectics—is also absolute. Thus it must be possible for a work of art which refers to or enacts this absolute truth to present something that is permanently true, that is always recognisable as true by a reader able to make contact with the particular way in which such absolute truth is presented. Jack Lindsay, in his wartime pamphlet *Perspective for Poetry* seems to me to express this fact well:

> True art is that which embodies an image of life in movement. Though it may deal with social conditions long passed away, and foreign to everything we are accustomed to, yet it will evoke our response if its pattern is true, if it really mirrors change and development. Through all the conditioning and relative factors there bursts a living

[23] Georg Lukacs, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat", *History and Class Consciousness*, London, 1971, p. 175.

[24] W. K. Wimsatt, "Genesis: A Fallacy Revisited", in *The Disciplines of Criticism*, ed. Demetz *et al*, New Haven and London 1968, p. 224.

[25] It is significant that, having been forced to reject the theory of the total autonomy of the work of art because of its internal contradictions, some critics are now trying to establish a slightly larger autonomy of, say, the triad of writer, work and reader, leaving out, of course, society.

[26] Elder Olsen, essay on "Sailing to Byzantium", reprinted in *Five Approaches of Literary Criticism*, edited Scott, Collier paperback, p. 225.

[27] Helen Gardner, *op cit*, p. 18.

[28] *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, Moscow, n.d. p. 35.

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element which remains perpetually significant. We respond because our experience of process has a similar basic pattern, however differently related.[29]

[29] Jack Lindsay, *Perspective for Poetry*, London 1944, p. 10.

In the second part of this article, which is to follow, I want to look at some specific works of literature and see how the theoretical positions I have advanced here accord with our practical experience of artistic response.

# Notes on the Concept of Intellectuals

Martin Jacques

I would have liked to have described this article as a "theory of intellectuals" or at least something a little more definitive than "notes" but alas it can have no such pretensions. Its institutional roots lie somewhere in the events leading up to a discussion on "Intellectuals and their Role Today" which was organised by the Communist Party's Cultural Committee in March 1969, but its political and theoretical roots, which are needless to say far more important, cover a rather longer period and a seemingly ever-expanding number of problems and concepts.

This article represents a re-working of the early parts of a wider subject matter and is approximately therefore an introduction to a more comprehensive concept of intellectuals, in attempting to answer some of the more basic questions about the nature of the intellectual and intellectual activity in relation to the changing social, economic and political structure of the bourgeois-democratic states. As such, I have leaned very heavily indeed on Gramsci's writings to the extent that many of the concepts used are derived from his work although I have suffered from the fact that much of his work remains untranslated and I have only really used the Italian volumes to "check" on various of Gramsci's ideas.

## I. Problems concerning the definition and concept of the intellectual

### 1. The Traditional Emphasis on Cerebral Qualities

Marxists use social terms like "class", capitalism", and the "state" in a very distinct and precise scientific manner as part of a much wider analysis of the laws of motion of society. But if we examine the general written and verbal usage of such terms we find rather different sets of meanings which are part of or imply (even at the level of "commonsense") rather different (conscious or unconscious) social concepts.

The diversity of meanings in the usage of such social terms is most evident—and explicit—in those theories which attempt to analyse these terms at some depth. This is not so apparent at the more superficial and descriptive levels when the terms embrace a rather narrower set of characteristics some of which are more or less common to all or most concepts.

It is precisely at this descriptive level that we find a most important common element in all concepts of the intellectual, namely the distinguishing physical characteristics. These characteristics, which are more appropriately denoted as "cerebral" qualities, include a concern for abstract reasoning, for theoretical generality and for the inter-connecting of problems and subjects.

However, in the great majority of usages, both historically and in the contemporary world, the term "intellectual" has in effect been suspended at this superficial and descriptive level such that these distinguishing cerebral qualities approximate to the total *explicit* meaning or concept. This is true not only in relation to its everyday verbal use but also in certain reflective written work of which there are several recent examples.[1]

[1] Recent articles include *New Society;* April 17, 1969, December 24, 1964, April 7, 1966, in addition to a series of articles in *The Listener* in 1968. Also J. P. Nettl *The Decline and Fall of the Intellectual* and *Rosa Luxemburg Today*, in *New Society*, April 17, 1969 and April 7, 1966, respectively.

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Such usages of the term intellectual contain no explicit social element and are consequently useful and applicable in only a very limited and superficial sense. Or, to put it another way, when the term intellectual is used like this its *explicit* distinguishing criterion is "cerebral qualities" in the abstract rather than in the context of the social structure. Of course such cerebral qualities do not develop and manifest themselves in the abstract but are products of a class society and consequently even then usages of the term intellectual must inevitably possess an *implicit* social element, though perhaps of a less formal and rigorous character than that to be found in more fully-fledged social theories.

We can illustrate this latter point by analysing two examples. The most widely understood and accepted definition of intellectuals has been disseminated by those who regard themselves as belonging to such a category. They have conferred an almost caste-like quality on its composition, emphasising the peculiar, almost magical, semi-god-given characteristics of its members. At no stage is any real attempt to explain why such groups exist, how they developed, their relationship to the various social classes within society, and as a consequence, while the explicit categorisation of intellectuals is at an exclusively "cerebral" level, the implicit social element is not only elitist, tending towards a belief in "innate" characteristics, but also acquiesces in the existing organisation of society.

In some measure this helps to explain why one frequently finds the term intellectual being used in a rather pejorative sense by significant sections of the working class. For them on the one hand it denotes not only someone who uses books, relatively abstract ideas etc., but on the other it also embodies some concept of what such a person (and his characteristics) represents, given the fact that historically mental labour (theoretical and practical) has on the whole been organically linked to and on the side of the bourgeoisie. The social element is therefore again clearly present but it is either implicit or explicit only at a commonsense level, such that it represents (in its most class-conscious form) an extension of the consciousness largely derived from the economic class struggle.

## 2. The Indispensibility of the Social Context[2]

Although we have indicated that even the most "cerebral"-orientated concepts of the intellectual have an implicit social element, for Marxists, and indeed for various other social theorists, such a social term as intellectual cannot be left at a descriptive-commonsense level, it must be related to the social structure such that intellectual activities are seen in the context, however mediated, of a class society.

As we have already suggested, of course, such a methodological approach has not been the exclusive property of Marxists, with Mannheim, Mosca and Pareto being amongst those sociologists who have attempted to develop a concept of intellectuals which is related to the organisation of society. Although Lenin in particular frequently used the term intellectuals it was Gramsci who, impelled by circumstances, found the term and, given the nature of Italian society, discovered the need for locating an explicit, theoretical concept of intellectuals in a Marxist analysis of society.

His first concern was to argue against a caste concept of intellectuals resting on intrinsic cerebral characteristics and to emphasise the indispensable importance of considering them in a social context. He wrote:

> "the most widespread error of method seems to me that of having looked for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations. Indeed the worker or proletarian, for example, is not specifically characterised by his manual or instrumental work, but by performing this work in specific conditions, and in specific social relations. . . ."[3]

Gramsci insisted that in a certain sense "all men are intellectuals"[4] because all men are engaged in intellectual-cerebral activity as well as muscular-nervous effort, not only in relation to their "leisure time" but also in connection with their occupation. However, in seeking to understand intellectual activity in relation to the mode of production Gramsci was primarily concerned with the balance between "mental" and "physical" labour in the context of their social occupation, hence "not all men have in society the function of intellectuals"[5]

## 3. The Concept of Intellectuals

This concept of intellectuals thus rests on a concrete analysis of such cerebral-intellectual activities within the framework of a given mode of production and in relation to the different social classes. It insists that the development of intellectual-

[2] At a historical-semantic level, it is interesting to note that the word "intellectual" first appeared along with other terms like "class", "bureaucrat" and "socialist" during the Industrial Revolution which marked a vast extension in the division of labour and a gradual change in the structure of political power.

[3] A. Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, (1971), p. 8.

[4] Ibid. p. 9.

[5] Ibid. p. 9.

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cerebral activity has not proceeded in isolation, in a special socially-sealed compartment, but that, on the contrary, it has been formed in relationship to the real world of production and the corresponding organisation of society. We will limit our rather schematic concrete analysis, however, to capitalist society.

From certainly the mid-nineteenth century, but in many sectors earlier, with the appearance of new industries and the increasingly complex nature of production, a whole range of new functions began to emerge within the process of production. This extension of the division of labour not only resulted in a series of new skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations but also, based on the increasing divorce of the capitalist from the practical operation of the firm, a range of new organisational, commercial and technical functions related to the market and the actual organisation of production which were previously largely combined, albeit at a more primitive level, in the classical entrepreneur. These new functions produced new categories of labour but, within the new sections of wage-labour, although they were not capitalist in their relationship to the means of production, were organically linked to the industrial bourgeoisie both in relation to their own status and advancement and generally in relation to wage-labour also.

The emergence of new groups of labour which were neither capitalist by economic function nor necessarily working-class in social context, however, was not confined to the immediate world of production. Indeed, the development of the economic structure had been accompanied by an enormous growth in and refinement of that range of intellectual functions which was concerned with the operation of on the one hand, the state and on the other hand, that body of "private" institutions engaged in political, social, religious, theoretical etc., activities. It was within these superstructures of society that the political and ideological interests of the different classes were established, articulated and fought for. However, while the state, in accord with its essence, was overwhelmingly staffed by those politicians and civil servants who consciously identified themselves with the interests of capital, the civil society embraced not only those lawyers, politicians, journalists, writers etc. who more or less closely associated themselves with bourgeoisie, but also others, albeit a minority, who consciously represented the interests of other classes. If we ignore these differences for the moment, however, the general point is clear. The capitalist mode of production had already by the mid-nineteenth century created such new categories of intellectual labour not only within the world of production but also within the superstructures.

Thus, both of these new categories of intellectual labour had arisen not in the abstract but as a consequence and a product of development of the capitalist mode. Though the great majority were more or less directly linked to the modus operandi of the bourgeoisie, while noting that in the instance of mid-nineteenth century it is necessary to distinguish between the landed and the industrial, some were also linked to other classes, most notably the industrial proletariat. Gramsci described this category as "organic intellectuals":

> "Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields"[6]

Not all intellectuals, however, are, or were, of this particular type. Each major social class has, in its development, been confronted with another category of "pre-existing" intellectuals who have regarded themselves as independent of any social class and who have appeared to embody a tradition and continuity which was derived from their own institutions and the works of their predecessors. Historically, these groups of intellectuals have generally been associated with particular "institutions" within society which have often been quite powerful and have usually been relatively "socially-remote" from existing classes including, most importantly, the ruling class. That is, they have not only regarded themselves as being independent of the ruling class, in itself a fact of considerable political and ideological significance, but they have also enjoyed, on the whole, much greater social-occupational autonomy from the ruling class than the latter's own organic intellectuals, their cerebral activities consequently being less subject to the immediate and concrete intellectual demands and constraints of the dominant social class. Gramsci described this category as "traditional intellectuals":

> "However, every "essential" social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure, has found (at least in all of history up to the present) categories of intellectuals already in existence and which seemed indeed to represent an historical continuity un-interrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social forms".[7]

In practice the distinction between these two fundamental categories of intellectuals, namely "organic" and "traditional", is not as clear as the theoretical demarcation might at first indicate,

[6] Ibid. p. 5.
[7] Ibid. p. 6-7.

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especially with regard to the advanced bourgeois democracies. Here, as for example in the case of Britain, the development of the capitalist mode, in its state-monopoly epoch, has proceeded to the point where virtually every sector of economic, political, social and intellectual activity is now impinged upon and directly influenced by the respective demands of and struggle between capital and wage-labour.

One of the effects of this tendency has been to seriously undermine the traditional social and intellectual autonomy of two of the most important historical centres of the traditional intellectual, namely the church and the university, the change being most comprehensive in the instance of the latter, although still complicated and many-sided. The overall trend in relation to these two categories of intellectuals, in fact, would appear to be, in the case of the "traditional", towards a weakening of their general autonomy in the direction of a rather similar position to certain sections of the "organic" and, in the case of the latter, a very rapid growth in its numerical strength, a mushrooming diversity in its composition and an increasing autonomy for some of its groups.

The focus of our attention will be directed towards those intellectual functions consequent upon the activities and aspirations of wage-labour and capital for it is precisely this category, namely the organic intellectuals, which plays a crucial role in the system of consent in the bourgeois democracies and which has and will provide the basis for intellecuals of a new type within the working class movement, in contrast to "classical" period when it depended almost exlusively on traditional intellectuals (Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Luxemburg, Lenin, etc.); no doubt both types will continue to be of great importance but with the former enjoying increased significance.

## II. On the nature of organic intellectuals in the bourgeois-democratic states

### 1. Some Theoretical Points on the Social Location of Organic Intellectuals

In introducing the concept of the organic intellectual, we have already sought to make a distinction between those intellectual functions that have evolved directly from the development of production and those that have been concerned with the more general organisation of society. The distinction, however, is of some consequence.

The former, the "economic" organic intellectuals, perform functions which are very closely, sometimes intimately, bound up with the activity and perhaps technical understanding and competence of the capitalist, to the point where, at the extreme, the two merge in the identity of some of the leading managers. The intellectual functions of the latter, however, that is the "socio-political" organic intellectuals, are of a more mediated character, being less determined by and certainly more removed from, the direct activities of the capitalist, especially as the specialisations (within the spheres of production and society) have become increasingly elaborate and the bourgeoisie consequently less and less able to play a direct and practical role within both production and society in contrast to the situation a century ago for example.

Of course the nature of this relationship, the degree of connection or what Gramsci described as the "organic quality"[8] of the various strata of intellectuals within the superstructures varies as according to their position within the latter, being most tried and trusted for those involved in the most sensitive and important area, namely the state, a point we shall return to shortly. Nevertheless, all socio-political organic intellectuals bear a distinct relationship to the bourgeoisie (or other social class) although this is always most clear—and determinant—for the higher levels: as a category they are the "organisers" of society, making the bourgeoisie conscious of its own homogeneity and aims, "regulating" its social and political activities, playing a crucial "directive" role[9] in the elaboration of its position within society.

Of course, there is another theoretical distinction to be made between these two types of organic intellectuals which has been implicit up until now but which will now be made explicit. The activities of the economic organic intellectuals are to be located primarily in the world of production and therefore the "base" or "economic structure" while the activities of the socio-political organic intellectuals are largely centred within the superstructures of society. However, while this difference, together with its implications, is of considerable significance, it should also be noted that with, for example, the growing involvement of the state in economic affairs and the vastly-increased importance of science and technology in the process of production, the distinction is now more complex and the relationship between the two types more imprecise and, for certain sections, much closer.

### 2. On the Nature of the Superstructure

It was in this relationship between the base and superstructure, or more precisely in the nature and relative autonomy of the superstructures, that Gramsci sought part of the explanation for the political differences between the "advanced" capital-

[8] Ibid. p. 12.
[9] Ibid. p. 10.

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ist societies (like Italy) and Russia in 1917 and consequently the necessary differences in their respective revolutionary strategies.[10]

Whereas in pre-revolutionary Russia the superstructures were relatively simple and ill-developed and hence the coercive element, as represented by the state, highly conspicuous and frequently employed, in the bourgeois democracies the superstructures are an "effective and operating reality",[11] in Gramsci's words, reacting back on the base and achieving "unity in multiplicity". It was in the context of this general physiognomy that Gramsci developed a more detailed analysis of such superstructures in which he distinguished between two fundamental areas namely the "political society", or the state, and the "civil society".[12]

The political society represents the political (and judicial) rule or government of the bourgeoisie, embodying the coercive and disciplinary apparatus of the latter, while the civil society embraces the "private" institutions, that is the various non-official organisations such as the political parties, church, trade unions etc. The relationship between the political and civil societies is clearly of great importance, but in practice it varies as according to the relative development and stability of the society in general of which both the base and the superstructures are a part. In particular perhaps the more economically-developed and politically-stable the society, the greater the role of the civil society tends to be and the more the role and essence of the political society, above all in the sense of it being constituted for society as a whole, is camouflaged and concealed.

It is in such a situation that day-to-day bourgeois rule rests on a system of consent rather than the direct use of coercion; that is, the maintenance of capitalist society in general rests upon neither the open violence of the bourgeoisie nor the coercion of its state machine. On the contrary it depends upon the support and consent of large sections of the oppressed classes who, in a simplified, distorted and vulgarised form, share the outlook of the ruling class. In the final analysis, as Gramsci points out, "this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production",[13] but its mode of operation and the indispensable means by which it in practice becomes an overall philosophy depends upon the crucial mediating role of the organic intellectuals within the superstructures who not only make the bourgeoisie aware of its own specific interests but are also responsible for those many but diverse ideological concepts which, especially in their more simplified forms, comprise the essential elements of the "commonsense" which secures large sections of the working-class in their ideological support of the system.

It is within the field of the civil society that this social hegemony of the bourgeoisie is developed, organised and exercised, a hegemony which is tempered by the occasional coercion (including "pressure") of the political society. The struggle within the civil society for supremacy is therefore on the one hand crucial for the security and stability of bourgeois power, at least in its existing "democratic" form, and on the other vital for the working class in its own fight to establish its historical role and aspiration. Thus, in conditions of bourgeois-democracy, the struggle of the working class for social hegemony in the civil society is a crucial pre-condition for establishing its ascendancy in the political society.

Of course this concept of the superstructures, as presented, remains highly theoretical, but, as in all Marxist analysis, it is precisely such theoretico-scientific concepts which can help us to understand that central question, namely "how the system works", and which can provide a crucial basis for a more practice-orientated political evaluation. Although in Italy the conditions of bourgeois democracy rapidly gave way to open dictatorship (i.e. the complete domination of the political society including control over the civil society) during the inter-war period, in a country like Britain (and indeed most of West Europe together with the United States since 1945) the civil society has exercised a continuously important hegemonic role for well over a century.

### 3. Organic Intellectuals and the Superstructures: Further Problems

Gramsci described the socio-political organic intellectuals as the "officials of the superstructure", the "connective tissue" of society, characterising them as "experts in legitimation" in connection with their function of organising consent.[14] But following our conceptual distinction between the political and civil societies, a further general division can be made in relation to the organic intellectuals

[10] See quotations from Gramsci in J. Merrington, "Theory and Practice in Gramsci's Marxism", pp. 155-7 in *The Socialist Register* (1968).

[11] Gramsci, *Opere II, II Materialismo Storico e la Filosofia di Benedetto Croce*, pp. 236-7, quoted by Merrington, *op cit*, p. 153.

[12] Gramsci, *Opere I*, "Lettere dal Carcere", (1948), Letter to Tatiana, pp. 136-8 (especially p. 137); *Opere III*, "Gli Intellettuali", (1949), "La formagione degli intellettuali", p. 9. (also, Gramsci: *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, p. 12.)

[13] Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, p. 12.

[14] Ibid. p. 12.

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who are engaged within these two respective spheres.

In reality, the "political" organic intellectuals are the conscious direct and organisational agents of the bourgeoisie, tending to possess a higher organic quality and be more closely connected to the dominant economic group. They are responsible for the operation of political government, the civil service, the army, that is, the various institutions of the state. The "civil" organic intellectuals, on the other hand, tend to exercise a less constrained role and enjoy, "on average", a more autonomous position in relation to the bourgeoisie as a class, although this is by no means a universal characteristic. They are responsible for the activities of such organisations as the political parties, the media and the church, which enjoy a definite though variable "independence" in their relationship with the political society in the bourgeois democracies.

These, however, must be treated as only very general (horizontal) "levels" or "layers".[15] In practice the situation is immensely complicated firstly, by areas of social activity which seem to and *in some senses* actually do fall between the political society and the civil society and, secondly, by the fact that the civil society, far from being corporate, is essentially disparate and pluralistic with each component having its own relationship with the bourgeoisie (or other social class).

In the first instance, in the context of a general expansion of its role and responsibilities, the political society has increasingly acquired a hegemonic (or at least persuasive) function rather than simply a coercive essence. Thus, primarily in response to the growth of intellectual activities within both the world of production and society, the state has been the operative agent in the vast expansion of the educational system while, to cite another example, it has maintained a continuous albeit indirect responsibility for the main broadcasting service, namely the BBC, since its foundation, the explanation for which is no doubt multi-causual but most importantly involves the influence of this media within the civil society. While both of these areas have in common the fact that, at least in Britain, they are normally subject only to the indirect or relatively indirect control of the state, education is essentially distinct from such public corporations in that it is highly variegated in character, embracing different sectors and levels, different kinds of institutions, different degrees of autonomy and, in accord with its essential character and historical evolution, subject, in its size, form and content, to a complex interaction of forces derived from both base and superstructure. Thus the state leaves its imprint on the educational system in only a mediated and general fashion which is far from total and absolute. As a consequence, the organic intellectuals within education, that is the school teachers, lecturers etc., are of a qualitatively different character from civil servants, for example, in that the content of their intellectual activity is only very loosely and indirectly determined by the political society to the point where they can, within definite limits, present a different view of the world based in some degree on the interests of another class.

In the second instance, it is clear, as we have already suggested, that many of the organisations within the civil society have their own direct relationship with sections of the bourgeoisie (or other classes). Thus most political parties are closely linked to one social group or another while the capitalist press, although performing an indispensable intellectual function, is actually owned and normally closely controlled by its various owner-proprietors.[16] In these cases, those organic intellectuals who occupy the top positions (i.e. the national leaders, editors, etc.) are very closely connected to the dominant economic group, their organic quality resembling that of the "officers" of the political society, although, in contrast to the latter, their relationship is normally with a more restricted section of the bourgeoisie.[17]

This growth in the role of the political society has not only meant that it has acquired a significant hegemonic function but also that the areas of contact between the civil society and the political society have greatly increased to the point where important strata of political and civil organic intellectuals find themselves not only in close contact with each other but also possessing a high degree of occupational and intellectual mobility between the two spheres.

It is precisely this special access to the political society, its personnel and activities, that has had an important effect in creating within the civil society an important body of civil organic intellectuals (journalists, academic economists, scientists, politicians, even right-wing trade unionists) who, in valuing their privileges and in their anxiety to retain what is in reality a special if often very limited influence as well as a crucial source of information, accept certain informal limits on their code of behaviour and framework of analysis. They thus constitute what approximates to an "official" civil society which, in enjoying this special relationship with the political society, exercises a social hegemony which is tempered by and closely related to the outlook of the political society.

[15] Ibid, p. 12.

[16] i.e. it is also part of the economic structure.

[17] Here we are referring only to the organic intellectuals of the bourgeoisie.

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**4. Organic Intellectuals and the System of Consent**

Up until now we have only sought to make very general (horizontal) distinctions between the various categories of organic intellectuals. However, in order to appreciate the nature of the various institutions within the superstructures, the functions of the various strata of organic intellectuals and the more general system of consent which the bourgeoisie enjoys, it is necessary to examine the character of each category in itself and the relationship between the huge variety of intellectual functions that are involved.

**(a.) The Structure of Intellectual Functions within different Institutions**

In fact, every major institution embraces a more or less broad spectrum of intellectual functions from the most directive to the non-executive and repetitive which can be arranged in a hierarchical structure based on the intrinsic characteristics of the intellectual activity.[18]

The actual nature of the hierarchy of each institution, however, varies as according to the latter's essential role, that is its relationship to the needs and position of a fundamental social class. Thus, at the one extreme, while the civil service has a very elaborate hierarchy of intellectual functions, their mode of organisation is intimately related to the role of the civil service, namely the preparation and implementation of decisions which enjoy the force of law (i.e. it is not primarily concerned with the exercise of social hegemony). As a consequence, in this instance the main factors in binding the numerous lower grades of intellectuals (non-executive etc.) to the overall function and conception of the bureaucracy are a feeling of loyalty and duty, derived from a concept of the nature of the "service" (i.e. to society in general) which is widely held within the civil society, together with a certain more general institutional (as opposed to legal) "discipline"[19] Alongside these factors the role of any hegemonic function—which is exercised by the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and which is based on the organisation and elaboration of concepts—as opposed to people—is relatively small and largely limited to helping to imbue this attitude of "service" and "loyalty" to society as constituted amongst the lower grades of intellectuals.

The position is somewhat different and certainly more complicated within the civil society, largely because the organic quality of the intellectual functions involved is, on average, lower and generally their role more *flexible*. Thus while similar patterns of institutional "discipline" and relatively straightforward loyalty are present in varying degrees within each organisation and have played—and indeed still play—an important role in securing the allegiance of their respective lower grades of intellectuals who have little or no directive function, a very low organic quality and thus potentially a great deal in common with the working class, the structure of ideological concepts inherent in the hierarchy of intellectual functions, and thus the ideological hegemony of its leading intellectuals is considerably more important on the whole in comparison with the situation in the organisations of the political society. This of course corresponds with and is related to the fact that the *raison d'être* of these bodies (political parties, newspapers, trade union, church etc.) is the struggle to command support and exercise hegemony (i.e. influence and therefore compliance) on behalf of one social class or another amongst the people.

Thus, within each institution, be it a daily newspaper, the church or a political party, the hierarchy of intellectual functions not only reflects different degrees of organic quality and different degrees of responsibility and proven loyalty to the organisation, but also different levels of intrinsic intellectual competence as measured by the established requirements and standards of the organisation.

**(b.) The Structure of Intellectual Functions and the Exercise of Social Hegemony**

However, although such an examination of the internal mode of organisation of different institutions within the superstructures helps us to explain some of those factors which go to determine the behaviour and consciousness of socio-political organic intellectuals, we are not interested solely in this problem.

In addition we are concerned with their relationship to the various social classes, particularly the system by which the dominant class exercises its social hegemony and secures general consent. Here we must distinguish not only between *different levels of intellectual activity* as based on their intrinsic characteristics but also, judged by this same latter criterion, *the relationship between these various levels.*

Thus, within the civil society we find that different organisations play quite different roles in relation to the exercise of social hegemony. Let us take one example. The so-called "popular" daily press exercises a very important influence over wide sections of workers and intellectuals but the intrinsic nature of the intellectual functions involved is fundamentally one of *popularising* somewhat *simplified* versions of concepts which are generally derived from other areas of the civil society. The skill of the journalist is not on the whole directed towards fundamental scientific research but the brief, stimulating and analytical presentation of

[18] Gramsci, *op cit.* p. 13.

[19] i.e. "occupational" discipline.

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news based on pre-existing ideological concepts.

Thus, within the civil society there exists between as well as within different bodies a highly complex hierarchy of intellectual functions which in this instance are not primarily based on the organic quality (i.e. degree of connection to a social class) of different intellectuals but the intrinsic characteristics of the intellectual activity.

Hence, that category of intellectuals which is working at the most fundamental scientific levels, in fact the "creators" of the various sciences, art, philosophy etc., possesses a very special influence over other levels of intellectual activity within the civil society.[20] However, this is a most complicated question which requires detailed research into the various relationships involved: certainly the connection is rarely a simple one even, for example, in the relationship between Keynes and the economic policy and attitude of the State in the 1930's.

Nevertheless the exercise of social hegemony requires the recognition and utilisation of this gradation and consequently each major social class has always sought, above all in the struggle to achieve political power, not only to develop its own organic intellectuals but also "to assimilate and to conquer 'ideologically' "[21] the traditional intellectuals whose prime concern has tended to be such basic research etc., and who could also assist in the development of its own organic intellectuals.

This is thus not only a problem that has historically faced the bourgeoisie but also a task which has and still confronts the working class in its struggle for social hegemony in the capitalist countries. Indeed, Gramsci, in elaborating his theory of intellectuals, was intimately concerned with the problem of the intellectual and the intellectual function in relation to the working class and its revolutionary party and, in this context, recognised and underlined the importance of this "hierarchy" of intrinsic intellectual characteristics for the struggle of the party:

> "In the political and military struggle it may be good tactics to break through at the points of least resistance in order to be in a position to invest the stronger points with the maximum forces made available by having eliminated the weakest auxiliaries etc. Political and military victories, within certain limits, have a permanent and universal value, and the strategic end can be attained in a decisive way with general effects for the whole. On the ideological front, however, defeat of the auxiliaries and the minor followers has an almost negligible importance. On this front it is necessary to defeat the eminent people. Otherwise you confuse a newspaper with a book, minor daily polemic with a scientific work; the minor thinkers should be abandoned to the infinite casuistry of journalistic polemic".[22]

## III. On trends in relation to organic intellectuals in Britain

The foregoing discussions represent an attempt to elaborate a theoretical model, based largely on Gramsci's concepts and methodology, which might serve as a framework of analysis for on the one hand a more applied (and empirical) study of the whole category of mental labour, a section of which we often refer to as the "middle strata", and on the other hand a study of the system of power within British society.

It is not possible to attempt either of these two important tasks within the confines of this article but we shall nevertheless seek to make a number of preliminary observations with regard to the physiognomy of the former. In doing this I will try to avoid, as far as possible, repeating the substance (and statistics) of Alan Hunt's article in the June 1970 issue of *Marxism Today*.

As we have already indicated, there has been an ever-accelerating[23] expansion in the range of intellectual functions within both the world of production and the superstructures, the former being most marked in the newer science-based industries and the latter reflecting the increasing complexity of society together with the heavy occupational demands of the bourgeois system of consent. This of course has resulted in an enormous growth in the various categories of intellectual labour, an expansion which has embraced all or most levels but which has been most pronounced in relation to the "non-executive", lower-grade functions.[24]

Apart from those leading managers who are also significant owners of capital, virtually all these categories bear a broadly similar relationship to the means of production, namely that they are characterised by the fact that they sell their labour-power (to the "owner", be it a capitalist or the state) in return for a wage. Thus, as judged by the fundamental element within the Marxist concept of class,[25] the vast majority of organic intellectuals must be classified as "objectively working-class".

Nevertheless it is clear, and hence the term "middle strata", that in itself this does not explain satisfactorily their overall socio-economic position nor the consciousness which derives from this. The great majority of these organic intellectuals are in fact organic intellectuals of the bourgeoisie and it

[20] Gramsci. *op cit.* p. 13.
[21] Ibid. p. 10.
[22] Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, (1957), p. 97.
[23] See "growth indices" for "white collar workers" in Table I in Donovan Report Research Paper 6 (1967).
[24] Ibid.
[25] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (1965), Vol. 29, p. 421.

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is this organic quality, that is, their function in relation to the dominant social group, including all that this entails with respect to the question of hegemony which we discussed earlier, that forms the other main element in determining the consciousness and outlook of these strata.

Let us firstly consider those organic intellectuals involved in the world of production. Clearly it is those activities which possess the least organic quality, which enjoy almost no directive function and which are in fact the most difficult to distinguish from various manual occupations that are most likely to respond in accordance with their wage-labour context rather than their organic relationship. In practice this has become increasingly the case as the overall size of these categories (including their numerical representation per "plant") has risen sharply, thus tending to place them in a more "average" labour market situation and eroding their conception of a distinct, separate and somewhat superior role and status in comparison with the manual workers.

This process, however, has now extended beyond these "clerical" functions to embrace what are sometimes classified as the "lower professional"[26] (draughtsmen, technicians, laboratory technicians, etc.) and even, albeit to a more limited extent (in proportionate and qualitative terms), the so-called "higher professionals" (engineers, scientists, etc.). Nevertheless we can expect this process to continue amongst both economic and socio-political organic intellectuals because these changes are undoubtedly part of a longer-term trend which is leading to the gradual assertion of the wage-labour element over the organic tie within their overall socio-economic context and which is thus adding an essentially new and dramatic *dimension* to the crisis of the advanced capitalist societies, as evidenced by the "May events" for example, namely a major schism within the now very large category of organic intellectuals (of the bourgeoisie), with its consequent and far-reaching implications, both for the struggle within the world of production and, possibly more importantly, for the whole system of social hegemony exercised by the ruling class.

Thus, to return to the economic organic intellectuals in particular, in the instance of the former two groups that we have outlined above, this trend has led to a growth in trade unionism amongst these sections together with the adoption of forms of union organisation which are more akin to or even actually organisationally linked to "manual" unions. In the latter case, however, that is the "higher professionals", this development is still at a tentative and embryonic stage, with various professional associations and learned institutes beginning to transform themselves into fully-fledged bargaining unions, albeit rather reluctantly and with a rather narrow and elitest concept of their position in production and society.[27]

These changes which are taking place amongst the intellectual categories of labour within the world of production share, in varying degrees, one very important characteristic because of their organic relationship with the bourgeoisie, the adoption of even limited trade unionist aspirations involves a significant change in their ideological outlook which is not solely confined to the economic moment but involves *social*, *democratic* and *political* elements as well. This is not a simple problem, but it would appear that the relative importance of the social and democratic questions tends to increase as the organic quality of the intellectual function rises such that for the "higher professional" groups, a transformation in their consciousness of their economic position is likely to be accompanied by and closely related to a much wider ideological re-assessment of their relationship to society. This is linked to the relatively high organic quality of their intellectual function (with its consequent social implications) and the nature and significance of their intrinsic intellectual qualifications which make them more sensitive about such questions and potentially more responsive to developments within the world of science.

In certain respects this is even more true for many categories of intellectual labour within the superstructures where, as we have already observed, the social hegemony exercised by the dominant economic group is central to the substance and practice of their intellectual function. While recognising again the essential differences between categories and levels within this sphere, the on average lower organic quality of the functions involved and yet sharply hegemonic character of the intellectual functions which they perform, have the effect of sensitising their outlook to a whole range of issues within the spectrum of society besides the reality of their socio-economic position. Indeed, for important sections of the higher levels, the former may well precede the latter, at least as far as a more open and less sectional form of unionism is concerned.

Thus we find that some of the most important struggles and changes in outlook within these areas of society have been highly "ideological" in character showing a deep concern for the internal structure (democratic) and overall role (social and political) of their institution in society. Similarly, small but significant sections of these intellectuals have played a very important role in such social, democratic and political movements as Women's Liberation (social), the anti-imperialist struggle (political),

[26] Table I Donovan Report as already cited.

[27] *Sunday Times*, July 4, 1971.

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the communications group (democratic, social, political), CAFD (democratic),[28] BSSRS and pollution, while the student movement, which requires separate analysis, is closely linked to and has played an important causal role in these developments.

The various strata of intellectuals are thus sensitised by a complex interaction of forces ranging from their socio-economic position (especially for the lower levels, above all in the economic structure and to a less extent, the political society) to aspects of the general crisis of international monopoly capitalism (especially for those in the civil society, notably education, etc.). It is precisely this characteristic, following from their position in society, which explains why categories of intellectuals display uneven levels of ideological development not only between groups but also within their own outlook. It is precisely this characteristic, moreover, which must be analysed in concrete detail in the case of each category and which must guide the political work of the party and the progressive movement in relation to each group. This section, however, represents only a very brief and partial survey of the problem.

[28] These designations are not exclusive but serve to emphasise particular characteristics of these movements in relation to others.

## Conclusions

The analysis which has been presented in Section I and II will, I hope, serve to clarify the nature of mental labour and activity in the system of social production within contemporary British society. The approach, which borrows so much from Gramsci helps, I think, to explain the nature of the system of power within a bourgeois democracy, the composition and structure of the exploited classes and, consequently given the growing tendency for various categories of intellectuals to adopt the modes of economic organisation of the manual workers, to identify with the traditional labour movement and to adopt "anti-capitalist" positions on a whole spectrum of issues, suggests a central complex of class alliances that can and will be forged in the struggle for socialism. As such I suggest it would correspond quite closely to Carrillo's concept of the "alliance of the forces of labour and culture".[29]

[29] S. Carrillo, *Problems of Socialism Today* (1970), p. 72-82, 124-7.

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# Noam Chomsky

## Willie Thompson

In the June 1970 issue of *Marxism Today* Maurice Cornforth in discussing Lenin's contribution to philosophy referred to the present condition of philosophy in bourgeois culture;

> "The key criticism of the so-called 'scientific' philosophies of the bourgeoisie remains . . . not that they deny the reality of the material world (which many do not deny), but that they treat our scientific knowledge of this reality only on the level of knowledge of 'appearances'."

Such a state of affairs is not confined to the austere realms of philosophy, it reflects a temper of mind which penetrates the entire spectrum of social science, from economics to psychology.

Sometimes this attitude is called positivism or empiricism and pretends to be the quintessence of a common-sense outlook that refuses to take account of anything other than the facts and nothing but the facts. Unfortunately it also fails to consider all the facts, such as exploitation in economics, the implications of class division in sociology and political theory, the dynamics of the class struggle in history.

### Academic Social Science

The problems studied by academic social science today tend to be restricted in an extraordinary narrow compass, more and more information gathered about less and less; and to degenerate into complete triviality. The results of such research give no clue to understanding the society we have to live in or to making sense of human development. One renowned polemicist, Karl Popper, has gone to great lengths to prove that theories which connect one aspect of social life with another are unscientific and furthermore immoral because they give rise to totalitarian politics.

This is not to say, however, that contemporary social science has no practical function, indeed it has. But its concrete applications tend to be even more deadly than the academic aspect, for they set out to attain certain objectives designed to lubricate the established social machinery, without taking into account the fact that society is dominated and its objectives defined by a murderous and immoral ruling class. So with good conscience psychologists enable advertisers to advertise more effectively, or construct intelligence tests to keep the lower orders in their educational place. Economists recommend wage cuts for the health of the economy and sociologists devise counter-insurgency programmes for Latin America.

Such social science then is either apologetic or manipulative, and among its main tasks is to establish the conviction that things cannot be other than they are, a job it has taken over from establishment religion and performed on the whole satisfactorily.

### Positivist Approaches

Marxism by contrast presents a social science which is all of a piece. It is a synthesis of history, economics and sociology; it investigates capitalism as a social organism with a life cycle of development and decay and inevitably bound to extinction. Positivist social science has developed largely in reaction to this conception. It has long abandoned any attempt to combat Marxism on its own ground to demonstrate that bourgeois society is eternal and in accordance with human nature, rather than being the historically transient form Marxists assert.

Instead, on the excuse that such questions are beyond the scope of the evidence and hence illegitimate, it raises a ban on any generalisation about society as a whole or any wide-ranging theorisation. It defends capitalist society by refusing to recognise its existence as such. A theory which brings society as a whole into focus is obliged to consider the rationality of the whole structure. If only little bits are studied on the other hand, it can be shown that, however absurd they might appear at first inspection, they can be justified by showing that they fit into the overall set-up, which the investigator accepts as valid. Thus it can be "proved" that advertising assists the economy, or even that any conceivable activity is "productive".

Such sterility in theory coupled with immorality in action has been one factor involved in recent student militancy, having outraged many responsible young people with a serious attitude to world problems who are naive enough to believe that the social sciences should play some part in solving them.

On account of the "crisis in the humanities" it was therefore not wholly remarkable that a countervailing movement should develop inside

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the social sciences themselves, that efforts to achieve scientific generalisation should be made and theories developed to organise the huge accumulation of apparently unconnected data which positivist methods have bequeathed to each particular science.

## Chomsky's Work on Linguistics

To all appearances the work being done in Linguistics by Noam Chomsky and his followers constitutes the beginning of this movement. Linguistics was probably the most favourable place to begin, being in many ways the most abstract and technical of the social or behavioural sciences, the nearest to the physical sciences and so least subject to interference by positivist ideology.

Anyone who has been subjected to the dreary martyrdom of a course in school grammar might certainly wonder whether anything of far-reaching human significance was likely to come out of these pursuits, but language is of course the unique human characteristic, the precondition for social existence and the foundation of all culture. If it should prove to be the case that behind their apparent diversity all languages have certain things in common, an understanding of the structure of language and its mode of operation might provide some valuable clues to the manner in which human beings think and function.

When language is considered in this light certain facts immediately stand out, and two are of particular importance for Chomsky's standpoint. Firstly, language is quite unlike the communication used by animals or drill-sergeants, a stereotyped signal producing an automatic response. On the contrary, the number of potential sentences in any language is infinite so far as is known. By means of language the human animal can voluntarily express any amount of information about any conceivable set of circumstances. A speaker instantly understands and produces sentences never encountered before. This is what makes social co-operation possible and likewise social control and manipulation. Language is infinitely *creative*.

Secondly, every child in mastering a grammar performs a phenomenal intellectual feat. Grammar may be said to be the instrument by which words are organised into sentences, involving a highly complex and diverse set of rules. The achievement is all the more remarkable in that it is entirely unconscious. A near-perfect proficiency is acquired and an incorrect sentence is immediately recognised even though the individual could not begin to define the rules being followed, even if the concept of grammar has never occurred to him. Occasionally mathematical prodigies appear who can perform extraordinary feats of calculation without being able to describe in any way the rules they use. Such cases are rare and remarkable, but linguistically the average child has parallel abilities and they are taken for granted.

## Generative Grammar

Noam Chomsky who was born in 1928 has worked on linguistics since 1955 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he is now professor in that field. His particular speciality has been the theory of syntax, which may be loosely defined as the formal structure of grammar excluding the question of meaning (semantics). His two most important publications developing this are *Syntatic Structures* and *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Chomsky's efforts have been directed towards the development of a generative grammar. This is in contrast to the normal type of *descriptive* grammar, which contents itself with listing grammatical rules. Generative grammar attempts to explain these rules by revealing the processes through which sentence formation takes place and describing the mental apparatus which, as it were, rejects certain constructions and accepts others. The actual grammatical rules themselves will then be found to follow logically from this basis.

To take a concrete example, the simplest model of generative grammar called "finite state grammar" holds that in beginning a sentence the speaker selects an appropriate word out of all possible words permissible at the beginning of sentences. Suppose he selects "the". This then narrows down his choice of words to follow—he might select "man", "dog", "fire" . . . etc., etc., but not "showed", "with", "struck", . . . etc. His next word once selected, his choice is narrowed down even further and so on till the sentence is complete. Artificial as this may sound it has furnished valuable results where applied to information theory and computers, though Chomsky has proved it inadequate to account for natural human languages.

## Chomsky's Model

Chomsky's own model is known as the theory of transformational generative grammar. This begins with the structural analysis of certain simple "kernel sentences", e.g. "The man read the book". Substitute other verbs and nouns, the structure is the same for all the simpler sentences in the language. Once this grammatical structure has been worked out certain "transformational rules" can be applied to give more complex sentences, e.g. "did the man read the book?"; "the book was read by the man", "the man I saw yesterday read the book". Due to the construction and condensation of phrases in normal speech, sentences with

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an apparently simple-word form can have complex grammatical structures. Consider the sentence "I had a book stolen". This can have two quite distinct meanings, either "A book was stolen from me", or "I caused a book to be stolen". Depending on the meaning this string of words can have two completely different grammatical structures.

According to this theory a person commencing a sentence does not start by selecting a word but by selecting the plan ("deep structure") of the kernel sentences and applying the appropriate transformational rules. All done automatically and unconsciously of course.

## Critique of Positivism

Chomsky has not confined his work strictly to linguistic theory but has made this the basis of a vigorous attack on positivism both in linguistics (*Cartesian Linguistics* and *Aspects*) and in psychology generally (*Language and Mind*). He does not claim to have established a general theory of language, but he does assert, in opposition to the positivists, that it is possible in principle to do so and that transformational grammar is the first step towards such an undertaking. He also maintains that, beneath their apparent diversity, the syntax of all human languages are essentially similar and that this is because we are born with a biological predisposition to form language in a particular fashion. There are, he is convinced, certain "universal rules" of grammar (though none has been discovered so far) which apply to all human languages, are imprinted in the brain from birth and account for the facility displayed by children in language acquisition:

> ". . . it seems plain that language acquisition is based on the child's discovery of what from a formal point of view is a deep and abstract theory—a generative grammar of his language . . . there is surely no reason for taking seriously a position that attributes a complex human achievement entirely to months (or at most years) of experience, rather than to millions of years of evolution . . ." (*Aspects*, p. 58-59).

Moreover, if general theory is possible in linguistics there can hardly be any valid reason for believing it impossible in other fields of human activity. It is postulated that in the end history economics, psychology, aesthetics may even be amenable to the same sort of mathematical techniques of investigation developed (again to a large extent by Chomsky) in connection with linguistics. Already his work is having major repercussions in psychology, the field of study most closely related to linguistics, and in philosophy regarding the theory of knowledge.

The foundations of positivism, in short, are threatened with being undermined. Should this happen it is likely that social scientists will again have to confront society, being no longer able to take refuge in the alleged impossibility of general theory. This will once more open up the dialogue closed for nearly a century between Marxism and the academic social sciences. Marxism cannot but benefit from such a process in the same sense that Marx founded his work on the best theoretical achievements of bourgeois philosophy and economics represented by Hegel and Ricardo.

## Chomsky's Politics

According to Chomsky's own statement there is no direct link between his scientific work and his political position except in so far as the creativity of language on which he lays such stress is only one aspect of a need for freedom and self expression which applies to the human personality generally. Given this presumption the question arises as to which type of social organisation fulfills these needs best.

Chomsky is a radical who is, so far as we know, attached to no specific organisation. His most effective political work has been done in the exposure of those he terms the "new mandarins", social scientists who serve the imperialist establishment. In *American Power and the New Mandarins* (Penguin) he has attacked them in blistering terms, not merely for prostituting their skills to the US was machine, but for deliberately distorting and suppressing the facts of politics and diplomacy, cynically justifying their behaviour by the claim that the US has a divine right to run the world and is entitled to use any methods whatever

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to this end. They further compound their crimes by pretending to a specialised knowledge in social science, beyond the reach of the ordinary person, which they allege gives them peculiar qualifications for organising society or judging that the Vietnam war is, despite all appearances to the contrary, in the best interests of everybody:

> "It is not merely that individuals are strongly tempted, in a society that offers them prestige and affluence, to take what is now called a 'pragmatic attitude'. . . . Rather what we must also expect is that political elites will use the terminology of the social and behavioural sciences to protect their actions from critical analysis—the non-specialist does not, after all, presume to tell physicists and engineers how to build an atomic reactor. And for any particular action experts can certainly be found in the universities who will solemnly testify as to its appropriateness and realism . . . thus we already find . . . the proposal by a leading political scientist that we try to impose mass starvation on (China) if their government does not accept our dictates. And it is commonly argued that the free-floating intellectual, who is now outdated, has no business questioning the conclusions of the professional expert equipped with the tools of modern science".

The moral deterioration in the establishment intelligentsia slides towards the standards of the concentration-camp experimenters in Nazi Germany. Chomsky attributes this in part to their obsession with *measurable behaviour* as the sole criterion of legitimate social science and refusal to recognise the existence of factors like human solidarity, morality or personality which are not immediately measurable. Hence they regard the Vietnamese in the same light as the laboratory rat whose behaviour can be conditioned by an appropriate schedule of rewards and punishments —cheese and electric shocks for the rat, coca-cola and napalm for the Vietnamese.

## Some Criticisms

Chomsky has no claims to be a political theorist and expounds no revolutionary perspectives involving classes other than the intellectuals. His political statements and analysis relate almost wholly to the intelligentsia but among the many valuable and valid points he makes are also some highly questionable ones.

His political tendency is anarchist and he holds that intellectuals always tend to seek a position of elitist domination, that any sort of political authority is bad on principle and that the socialist states are in essentially the same position as the West merely being managed by technocrats of a different colour at the expense of the common man. He traces this alleged phenomenon right back to the beginning; according to him the Bolsheviks were a party of intellectuals who deliberately used and abused the workers' movement as their ladder to power. He refers to "the Bolshevik elitist doctrine of 1918".

On such a crucial issue, affecting as it does, the fundamental interpretation of 20th century history and politics one might expect Chomsky to display his usual formidable powers of logic and erudition. It is all the more astonishing that he does not. Masses of evidence and quotes are deployed in support of his arguments on US intellectuals, but not a single quotation from the Bolsheviks to demonstrate the supposed elitest nature of their doctrine. The question of political *practice* in the Soviet Union is another argument, what is at issue here is Chomskys claim that abuses grew out of the supposedly authoritarian and anti-working class temper of the Bolshevik party. Nor does Chomsky at any point try to reconcile his admiration for the Vietnamese struggle with the fact that it is inspired by the sort of political organisation that he most detests. Communist leadership has been stigmatised as certain to crush popular initiative, to be incapable of channelling and directing revolutionary energies and bound to culminate in dictatorship by bureaucratic cliques. Even the most rigorous and impeccable thinkers have their blind spots.

## Social Responsibility Defended

Nevertheless, in spite of these reservations, Chomskys writings and actions must be immensely welcome to all progresively minded people. Had he chosen to do so he could undoubtedly pass his life in enjoyment of the honour and reputation due to one of the most outstanding and original minds of the century. It is tremendously encouraging that such a person should use his own great understanding of scientific methodology to expose the rotten hypocricies and intellectual dishonesty practiced by the academic bully-boys of the American ruling class and defeat them on their own ground.

In acting thus, Chomsky, even though some political preconceptions may be in error, has affirmed the social responsibility of scientists and intellectuals to employ their talents for the betterment of the human species rather than its enslavement or destruction.

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